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Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Israel Presents 'More Flexible' Stance on NPT

TA2712121794 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 27 Dec 94 p A3

[Report by political correspondent Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel has presented a slightly more flexible position with regard to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT]. The Israeli delegation to the arms control talks in Tunis this month announced that in future, Israel would be prepared to consider joining the NPT as well as additional arms control treaties after a comprehensive peace had been achieved in the Middle East and the region had been demilitarized of nuclear weapons within the framework of regional agreements. Until now, Israel has refused to sign the NPT.

Prospective signatories to the NPT must declare that they do not possess nuclear weapons, pledge not to develop nuclear weapons, and place all their nuclear installations and materiel under international supervision. The new Israeli position on the issue was formulated in the course of acrimonious debates between Foreign and Defense Ministry officials.

Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri, who heads the Israeli delegation to the arms control talks, supported the proposal to reconsider joining the NPT in the distant future, because he did not want to see Israel accused of undermining the multilateral talks in Tunis. The new formulation was approved by Prime Minister Rabin before the delegation left for the talks.

Senior defense establishment and Foreign Ministry officials said yesterday that Israel would not initiate additional steps with regard to the treaty. According to the sources the United States was not expected to pressure Israel to join the NPT while the peace process was still underway. [passage omitted]

Arab-Israeli Talks

Rabin Makes 'Ground-Breaking' Visit to Oman

AFP Reports First-Ever Visit

NC2612194394 Paris AFP in English 1935 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Muscat, Dec 26 (AFP)—Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin is currently on a ground-breaking visit to the Gulf Arab state of Oman where for talks with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id, the official Omani news agency ONA said Monday [26 December].

The visit is a first to Oman by a senior Israeli official since the Jewish state was created in 1948. Israel and Oman have no diplomatic ties.

Qabus, Rabin Hold Meeting

JN2612202194 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1959 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Muscat, 26 Dec (WAKH)—His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin met here today in order to boost the current peace process [words indistinct] arrive at a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The Omani News Agency quotes a responsible source at the Omani Information Ministry as saying that the meeting falls within the context of Oman's support of the Middle East peace process and as part of its efforts (?to boost) this process which resulted in the Gaza-Jerico Agreement and the Palestinian National Authority's exercise of its powers inside the occupied Arab territories and the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

The (?news agency) noted that the meeting was held during a brief visit the Israeli prime minister made to Oman this evening.

Details on Entourage Given

TA2612201794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin paid a lightning visit to the Principality of Oman in the Persian Gulf today and conferred with its leaders, including Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that Mr. Rabin's aircraft left for Muscat this morning and is expected back tonight. Mr. Rabin is accompanied by his military aide, Major General Dani Yatom, and Shim'on Sheves, the head of the prime minister's bureau.

The visit was first reported by the Omani news agency a short time ago. Our correspondent notes that there have recently been reports on talks being conducted with the leaders of Oman and on the possibility of establishing relations with it. The principality was one of the Gulf states that announced dropping the secondary boycott of Israel.

Israeli-Syrian Talks Continue in Washington

Syrian Chief of Staff Said To Attend

TA2312185994 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 23 Dec 94

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Lebanese issue was raised in the Israeli-Syrian talks held in the last few days in Washington. Ambassador Rabinovich demanded that the Syrians curb Hizballah activity.

Referring to these talks, sources in Jerusalem told our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen today that the main achievement of the officers' talks was the very fact they were held. On the Israeli side they were attended by Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq, Intelligence Branch head Major General Uri Sagi, and Major General Dani Yatom, the prime minister's military aide. One of the Syrian participants was Chief of Staff Hikmat Shihabi.

Talks End 'Without Specific Results'

JN2512171094 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington—The meetings Syrian and Israeli officials have held in Washington to exchange views have ended without specific results.

SANA has learned that the sessions, which were held under U.S. sponsorship and with its participation, centered on the elements and principles of security arrangements between Syria and Israel within the framework of a total Israeli withdrawal to the lines of 4 June 1967.

The discussions were attended by Syrian Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Hikmat al-Shihabi, Israeli Chief of Staff Ehud Barak, other officers, and the Syrian and Israeli ambassadors accredited in Washington.

Dennis Ross, U.S. general coordinator of the peace process, is expected to follow up these discussions with the Syrian and Israeli ambassadors following the Christmas and New Years holidays.

It is worth noting that, in its capacity as the sponsor of the peace process, the United States has been hoping that these discussions would narrow the gaps and remove some obstacles on the Syrian-Israeli track and pave the way for resuming negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. But the Israeli side continued to present impossible demands that have nothing to do with the resolutions, international legitimacy, or the UN Charter—the basis on which the Madrid peace conference was convened.

Agreement Reached on Military Work Group

TA2612122594 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 26 Dec 94 p 18

[Report by correspondent Avino'am Bar-Yosef in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel and Syria have decided to set up a military working group for working out the details of the security package discussed last week by Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq and his Syrian counterpart, General Hikmat Shihabi. The decision to establish the working group was made after it became apparent that the chiefs of staff cannot stay away from their posts as well as conduct the negotiations in Washington.

Sources in Washington interpreted Syria's agreement to send Chief of Staff Shihabi to the talks as an indication of al-Asad's seriousness and of his willingness to upgrade the level of the talks. The sources noted, however, that there are still wide gaps between the sides and that Syria firmly rejects Israel's demand for an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] presence at early warning stations on the Golan Heights and for a more extensive demilitarization on the Syrian side of the border than on the Israeli side.

Sha'th on More Police Cooperation, Prisoner Release

TA2312172794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian Authority [PA] is interested in expanding the joint Palestinian-Israeli patrols and in establishing joint police stations. This was said by PA official Nabil Sha'th in a meeting with Police Minister Moshe Shahal, with whom he met in Haifa this afternoon. Our correspondent Haviva Roger reports that Mr. Sha'th asked that the Palestinians' request to release 500 security prisoners due to their age or health problems be reexamined. He also asked for cooperation in energy issues.

Islamic Affairs

ICO Expresses Concern Over Situation in Chechnya

LD2612081194 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2307 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah, 23 Dec—Dr. Hamid Algabid, secretary-general of the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO], has expressed the organization's concern over the conflict in Chechnya, which has led to disastrous losses in human lives and extensive damage.

In an ICO statement issued today, Dr. Algabid said Muslims all over the world feel deep sorrow because of the developments in Chechnya and are looking forward to the rights of the Chechen people to be respected, including their right to life and their legitimate aspirations.

The ICO secretary-general urged the international community to look into the current situation in Chechnya and consider using its diplomatic and political influence to bring this conflict to an end, and to make efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of this crisis.

Dr. Algabid called on Presidents Yeltsin and Dudayev to do all they can to find a negotiated solution to the crisis in Chechnya.

Islamic World League Statement on al-Aqsa Mosque

LD2612215494 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1838 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Mecca, 26 Dec (SPA)—The general secretariat of the Islamic World League [IWL] has urged leaders of Islamic nations to do their utmost to preserve the Islamic identity of Jerusalem, and, subsequently, to liberate it from Zionist occupation and return the al-Aqsa mosque and Jerusalem to Muslims as they had been throughout Islamic history.

A statement released by the IWL today on the anniversary of Isra' and Mi'raj said: On this occasion we remember the tragedies of our Islamic nation. The anniversary of Isra' and Mi'raj, which is linked to the holy al-Aqsa mosque, remind us that al-Aqsa is still captured and under the control of Israel, which dominates Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque which is regarded as the first of the two qiblahs and the third mosque to be visited, after the holy mosque in Mecca and the prophet's mosque in Medina.

The statement said that al-Aqsa mosque is still exposed to attacks and that the Israeli authorities, which have been persistently changing the features of Jerusalem, have continued to excavate around al-Aqsa mosque, seize the land and endowments that belonged to it and annex them to its authority, thus overriding UN calls and resolutions.

The statement added that the Israeli authorities often prevent prayers in al-Aqsa mosque under flimsy pretexts, thus defying the feelings of Muslims. [passage omitted]

The statement urged all the concerned international bodies to guarantee the security of the places of worship, and to do their utmost to prevent the Israeli authorities from continuing their attacks on mosques in Palestine, foremost among which is the al-Aqsa mosque which the Israelis are planning to destroy, to build the so- called Solomon's temple in its place.

The statement urged the Islamic nation's leaders to reiterate the principles of Islamic solidarity with all the Islamic peoples and oppressed minorities facing external threats. It stressed the need to help them and to offer all kinds of required assistance to ease their ordeals and help them to be firm, stand fast, and thwart external threats.

At the end of the statement, the IWL general secretariat expressed its regret that the anniversary should come when many Islamic peoples and Muslim minorities in the world are suffering from attacks, oppression, transgression and deprivation, as in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the republic of Chechnya, Kashmir, Azerbaijan, and other countries which are facing fierce external threats against their peoples and their Islamic identity.

Palestinian Affairs

Reportage on, Reation To Bus Bombing in Jerusalem

Sha'th 'Sharply' Denounces Bombing

TA2512102394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Sha'th has sharply denounced the attack near Jerusalem's International Convention Center this morning. Sha'th told our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem this was a particularly grave incident because it was carried out during Christmas. Sha'th said we must continue with the peace process despite the attack. Mr. Sha'th visited East Jerusalem and Orient House this morning. Later today he intends to pray at the Temple Mount mosques.

'Arafat Reportedly Condemns Attack

TA2512120094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat has sharply condemned what he called a criminal act in Jerusalem on the holiest day for Christians.

His spokesman, Marwan Kanafani, said that 'Arafat and the Palestinian Authority wish the wounded a speedy recovery and will continue condemning harm when it is done to innocent people of either side, mainly attacks on peaceful Palestinians.

Suicide Bomber Said Member of Police

TA2512115494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Iman Ghadi, the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] member who carried out the suicide attack in Jerusalem this morning, was a member of the Palestinian police force in Gaza. Our correspondent Dani Zaqen has the details:

[Zaqen] Palestinian sources in the Gaza Strip have said that Khan Yunus resident Iman Ghadi, 21, was recruited into the Palestinian police force last June. According to the sources, he participated as a policeman in the bloody incident near the Filastin Mosque in Gaza approximately two months ago, when 13 Hamas demonstrators were killed in a clash with policemen. According to the sources, after this incident Ghadi joined Hamas out of a desire to make amends for his actions. He even expressed his willingness to carry out a suicide attack. Four days ago he bid farewell to his friends in Khan Yunus and vanished from his home.

A Hamas leaflet distributed in Gaza today states that Ghadi planned to enter a bus carrying soldiers and officers, but due to a technical malfunction in the detonating device the 10 kg bomb exploded outside the bus. According to the leaflet, the attack was carried out in retaliation for continued land confiscation and Jewish construction in the vicinity of holy Jerusalem, and in retaliation for the car bomb explosion in Beirut, which has been attributed to Israel. The leaflet further claims the attack was in revenge for the murder of Hani al-'Abid, an Islamic Jihad member from Khan Yunus; and Ibrahim Yari, a Hamas member murdered in Jericho last week.

Sha'th Says PA Responsible

TA2512130694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Sha'th told our correspondent Yoni Ben—Menahem that he has no knowledge of its having been a Palestinian policeman who perpetrated the attack in Jerusalem, but if this is correct, the Palestinian Authority [PA] will take responsibility for it.

Hamas Spokesman Views Attack

NC2512191594 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1745 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Interview with Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman for Hamas, by Jihad al-'Idan; place and date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-'Idan] There has been a new martyrdom operation in West Jerusalem. Would you elaborate on this operation and its effects on the Zionist state?

[Ghawshah] According to a statement released by the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades inside the occupied territories, a martyrdom youth named Ayman today carried out a martyrdom operation in West Jerusalem near the Zionist parliament. He targeted one of the buses used by Zionist soldiers.

This struggler was martyred and the Zionist enemy admitted that 13 Zionists were injured. The Zionist source has not yet disclosed the identity of the wounded although there are indications and information that a number of them are Zionist soldiers.

This operation comes, first, to prove that Jerusalem—both east and west—is an inseparable part of Arab, Islamic Palestine. It also proves that the Palestinian people will not abandon Jerusalem or Palestine and that they will offer what they hold most dear to liberate this holy land. Secondly, the operation aims to show solidarity with the mujahidin from the Lebanese resistance and people in south Lebanon against the criminal operations of the Zionist enemy in Beirut a few days ago.

This confirms that there is combat unity among all Islamic fronts against the enemies of Islam in Palestine, Lebanon, and elsewhere.

[Al-'Idan] There is Zionist military massing, especially in Ramallah, during the Christmas holidays. What is your comment?

[Ghawshah] We are proud that the Palestinian nation is one that has been governed by Islam for a long time and that it respects religious Christian and other minorities and lives tolerantly with the Christian brothers, especially today, Christmas day. However, the operations against the Zionist occupation which threatens both Muslims and Christians must not be halted at all.

The Zionist enemy masses its troops in Ramallah and Bethlehem where the Christian brothers live and it does not distinguish between a Christian and a Muslim of this struggling nation. Therefore, all forces are required to stand up against this cancerous enemy which the West tried to plant in this Islamic region.

Hamas Statement on Bombing

JN2512195394 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Statement issued by 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades "in Palestine" on 25 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

Fight them, and God will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you to victory over them, and heal the breasts of believers. [koranic verse]

Jerusalem will remain the eternal capital of Palestine.

The 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades mourns the death of its living martyr Ayman Kamil Jum'ah Radi.

Military statement issued by Martyr 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades:

Our people in glorious Palestine; Our Muslim masses everywhere:

The Martyr 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades announces its responsibility for the heroic martyrdom operation carried out at 0615 today, Sunday, 25 December 1994, in the heart of Jerusalem only feet from the so-called The Nation's Buildings. That attack targeted occupants of a Zionist enemy bus transporting officers and soldiers serving in the Zionist Air Force. The bus carries the number 37-085-00.

Martyr hero Ayman Radi, from Khan Yunus in the Gaza Strip, who carried out that attack, had crossed all Zionist checkpoints and arrived in occupied Jerusalem, thus scoring another intelligence and security achievement for the Martyr 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades.

Minutes before the arrival of the Zionist enemy bus, our hero martyr arrived with the explosive device, which had 10 kg of highly explosive TNT. An error apparently prevented him from entering the bus. The hero detonated the device near the vehicle leaving several passengers dead and injured.

In this statement, we wish to stress the following:

1. The Zionist enemy's attempts to judaize Jerusalem and expand settlement activities force us to adopt all legitimate means approved by the heavenly messages and the UN laws to liberate occupied Jerusalem and return it to its legitimate owners.

2. The Zionist government's threats against the security of our people will not go unpunished. The Zionist intelligence services' assassination of al-Qassam Battalions member Ibrahim Yaghi in Jericho and Islamic Jihad member Hani 'Abid reveals to the entire world that the Zionist enemy is pushing in the direction of threatening security and stability. Our armed battalions will not allow them to do so regardless of the price we have to pay.

3. The 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades extends greetings to the fighters of the Islamic and national resistance in southern Lebanon, who are resisting the Zionist enemy's occupation of the Lebanese territory. It also offers the courageous Jerusalem operation to the souls of the martyrs who fell in Bi'r al-'Abd neighborhood in Lebanon few days ago in the boobytrapped car explosion planned by the Zionist enemy government.

O our kinfolk, O descendants of the virtuous companions of the prophet: The al-Qassam Battalions announces to the Arab and Islamic nations the martyrdom of its hero martyr Ayman Radi. It pledges to all honorable citizens of our Palestinian people to continue the armed struggle with daring, faithful bullets until the liberation of all Palestinian territory.

And God hath full power and control over His affairs; but most among mankind know it not. [Koranic verse]

The jihad continues until victory or martyrdom.

[Signed] 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas

[Dated] Palestine, 25 December 1994

Bomber 'Unstable' Former Policeman

TA2612102394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Marwan Kanafani, PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's media adviser, has confirmed that the terrorist who carried out yesterday's bombing in Jerusalem served with the Palestinian Police.

Kanafani noted, however, that the terrorist was mentally unstable and was discharged from the police several days ago.

Kanafani asserted that the Palestinian Police sought to interrogate the terrorist and had also arrested the man's father and brother.

Broadcast Commends Attack

JN2612184694 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 26 Dec 94

[Palestinian broadcast: "Talk of the Return"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother strugglers: Yesterday morning, the heroic Palestinian Arab martyr Ayman Kamil Radi, a resident of the heroic Palestinian Arab city of Khan Yunus, met death happy and contented. He obtained the satisfaction of God, his people, his homeland, and his nation. Similarly, he was happy with the operation he carried out. By his martyrdom, Ayman Kamil Radi will enjoy a high position in heaven, among the true believers and martyrs.

Yes, Ayman Kamil Radi faced martyrdom, but only after he had made the racist Israeli terrorists taste a high dose of bitter and fair Palestinian Arab retribution in retaliation for some of the Israeli terrorist crimes committed in occupied Arab Palestine and the occupied part of southern Lebanon.

The heroic Palestinian Arab martyr struck Israel when the latter thought that its terrorism, colonialism, and racism have provided it with a protective shield. Israel has deluded itself into believing that all this has provided it with security. Is it not Israel which claims daily that holy Arab Jerusalem, where Ayman Kamil Radio faced martyrdom, is the capital of Israel? Israel claims Jerusalem is the unified and eternal capital of Israel.

The terms used by Israel to describe Jerusalem as its eternal capital have drawn ridicule and become questionable. Regardless of its stepped-up criminal settlement activities and its Judaization of Arab Jerusalem, Israel's malice will remain transient, temporary, and bound to vanish, as proven by Palestinian Arab resistance operations in Jerusalem and the entire occupied Palestinian Arab homeland. At any rate, we would better recreate the atmosphere that surrounded the martyrdom of Ayman Kamil Radi. For this atmosphere will remain there until Arab Jerusalem triumphs over the evils of Israeli colonialism and the crimes of Israeli terrorism.

Ayman Kamil Radi delivered his splendid blow at the central bus station in occupied Arab Jerusalem near an Israeli military bus that was transporting 40 terrorist Israeli colonialists affiliated with the Israeli Air Force. Undoubtedly, the Israeli Air Force personnel were being readied for a fresh terrorist air raid against heroic southern Lebanon. The terrorist Israeli air raids there are deterred by the heroic Lebanese resistance men ably and capably. Ayman Kamil Radi delivered his blow where it hurts the most 10, months after Barukh Goldstein's massacre at the holy Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, to drive home the message that the revenge for the holy Ibrahimi Mosque is colossal.

At that moment also, Israeli bulldozers, concrete mixers, and cranes were being fuelled to demolish more Arab houses, sweep away more Arab land, and build more colonialist Jewish settlement units inside, around, and in the vicinity of holy Arab Jerusalem, reaching to Bethlehem and Ramallah and further beyond.

It is certain that Yitzhaq Rabin was at that moment—the moment when Ayman Kamil Radi made his strike—revising a new Israeli measure to exhaust the dignity of the proponents of self-rule either by saying that he—Rabin—wants to revise the clauses of the Oslo Agreement or even to annul that agreement, or by imposing his conditions, which are unacceptable, even to slaves in time of slavery, for holding self-rule elections. He, Yitzhaq Rabin, may propose to evacuate the soldiers of Zionist colonialism from certain West Bank cities for one day only, election day, and then return them to the same old positions, through the door and not the window.

As for Shim'on Peres, at that moment he may have been considering a new mockery against some Arabs, a mockery that does not affect the Arab people and the Arab citizen at all, when Shim'on Peres summons up Zionist political promiscuity and vulgarity about Israel joining or not joining the Arab League, as if there is no Arab nation that will expel any stain that tries to dirty the Arabism of the Arabs.

Therefore, and in such a bleak atmosphere as this is, the Arab nation and the Palestinian Arab people authorized their child, Ayman Kamil Radi, to indicate with his splendid, great martyrdom the picture of the Palestinian Arab future, and even the entire Arab future—an inevitably bright future, with the will of God and the firmness of the Arab people.

Ayman Kamil Radi announced to the entire world, and not only Israel, with his blood and on behalf of the Palestinian Arab people, that the demolition of racism and terror with voluntary Palestinian martyrdom is the straight road to liberation. With his blood that watered the pure and sacred land of Arab Jerusalem, the martyr announced that Jerusalem will be only Arab, as it has always been, and that it will remain as it has always been—a capital of Arab Palestine from time immemorial and until eternity. He announced that the crimes of Judaization and those who commit such crimes in occupied Jerusalem and the occupied Palestinian territory will be crushed, together with their terror, under the blows of the Palestinian Arab resistance.

On the morning of Christmas Day, Martyr Ayman Kamil Radi announced with his martyrdom that the restoration of peace to the land of peace is not a grant from Israeli racists and colonialists, because the restoration of genuine peace to the land of peace can only be achieved when pure, dear Arab blood is sacrificed for the sake of Palestinian Arab territory.

Finally, shall we talk about the losses of Israeli terrorists and colonialists in the Jerusalem martyrdom operation? No. There is no need to do so. One has to be without any brains to believe that an operation that completely destroyed the Israeli central bus station resulted only in the limited number of human losses Israel claimed, although Israel may claim to the people that even these little losses are great from its viewpoint.

Hamas Threatens Five More Attacks

JN2712075294 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In the city of Khan Yunus and from the house of Ayman Radi, who carried out the Jerusalem suicide operation the day before yesterday, a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] member, masked with a headdress, said that the movement will stage five more booby-trapped car operations against Israelis. He said: We promise more suicide operations and we will prove that Jerusalem will remain the capital of Palestine despite the Israeli process of Judaization.

A source close to 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, said that these operations could be staged simultaneously or at different times.

Hamas Issues Statement on Death of Member

NC2312140894 Paris AFP in English 1340 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Dec 23 (AFP)—The hardline Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) said Friday [23 December] the "weakness" of the Palestinian Authority was to blame for the killing of one of its followers in the autonomous West Bank enclave of Jericho.

Attackers knocked over Ibrahim Muhammad Yaghi, 30, with their car in the 'Aqbat Jabr refugee camp in the Jericho enclave Thursday, then shot him in the head.

In a statement released Friday, Hamas said the incident "proves once again the weakness of the so-called self-rule authority."

It charged Israel with masterminding the killing.

The group, which is violently opposed to the peace process, threatened to "double" its "revenge against the terrorist (Prime Minister Yitzhaq) Rabin, his soldiers and their collaborators."

A security official in Jericho told AFP authorities had launched an investigation into the incident, but had made no arrests so far.

"We are searching in every direction, but we have little background to work with," Mahmud 'Abbasi said.

Hamas accused Palestinian security forces of "protecting the Israeli occupation and chasing the mujahidin (holy warriors)," instead of "stopping collaborators and Zionist killers who freely roam the autonomous areas."

Hamas has had tense relations with Arafat's self-rule authority since autonomy was launched in the Gaza Strip and Jericho in May.

A clash between Palestinian police and Hamas militants in Gaza last month left 13 people dead and 200 wounded.

In its statement, Hamas also said Palestinian police had still not found the killer of Hani 'Abid, a leader of the Islamic Jihad organization, blown up by a car bomb in Gaza on November 2.

"Hamas holds the self-rule authority responsible for the continuation of such crimes, and reaffirms that its feeble and lax method of investigation can only lead to more crimes."

All political factions here blamed Israel for 'Abid's assassination, and said Palestinian collaborators carried it out.

Gaza police have detained several men suspected of planting the car bomb.

Minister on Israeli 'Violations' of Oslo Agreement

JN2512122994 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0710 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, minister of culture and information in the Palestinian Authority, by Ibrahim Milhim; place not given; from the "Good Morning, Palestine" feature—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Milhim] Mr. Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, Abu-Bashshar, good morning.

['Abd-Rabbuh] Good morning to you.

[Milhim] You and Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat visited al-Khidr village yesterday where the Israeli settlers aim to seize land. The Israelis repeatedly violate the Oslo agreement. The al-Khidr example is new evidence of this. What do you have to say about these recurrent Israeli practices?

['Abd-Rabbuh] This is not only a violation of the Oslo agreement. This is an attempt to show that it would be possible to pursue the peace process while settlements and expansion at the expense of the Palestinian people's rights and lands continue to take place. This is what the Israelis seek to emphasize and to establish as a basis. On the other hand, it seems that there has been a frenzied settlement campaign over the past few weeks, which has not stopped. Al-Khidr is part of this campaign. This also applies to large areas of land in Ma'ale Adumim, in several of Jerusalem's suburbs and the areas surrounding it, and this campaign even reached areas in Qalqilyah and Nabulus.

I would like to point out here too that Israel seeks to expand the belt of settlements in the Gaza Strip, and to prevent Palestinians from building there along the shore. All this portends great danger and all means must be mobilized to check it. That's why the National Authority [NA] yesterday emphasized the need to take appropriate measures to counter this new settlement onslaught which seeks to establish new facts on the ground before a final solution is discussed. They want to fragment the West Bank. They want to establish a network of settlement roads, link some settlements together, besiege several Palestinian cities, and thus establish new realities and, consequently, deprive the Palestinian people and the NA which represents this people of controlling their national soil.

[Milhim] Culture and Information Minister Mr. Yasir 'Abd- Rabbuh, one notices that the Israeli government uses two languages. A sweet language used by Peres affirming the abidance by the Oslo agreement, and another language used by the military and headed by Yitzhaq Rabin. There is a contradiction within the Israeli government?

['Abd-Rabbuh] I am not interested in the language used. What interests us and what we should tackle is that they are using the language of the bulldozer, the language of seizing new lands and encouraging the settlers. This is the language used on the ground. In this case, what difference is it to me if there are two languages, or that this minister's assessment differs from another minister. We should deal with the official policy that is carried out on the ground. This policy now explicitly violates all the provisions of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement.

[Milhim] What did the agreement specifically say about settlements?

['Abd-Rabbuh] This is something known. With respect to settlements, it was decided to start discussing them at the end of the second year of the agreement and that nothing on the ground that would prejudice the final solution should be carried out. Also, nothing should be done that would detract from the responsibility the Palestinian Authority or any Palestinian council that will be elected has toward the Palestinian territory in the West Bank and Gaza within the framework of a single geographic jurisdiction over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

All this is now being violated. All settlement issues are being violated. How long can this situation continue and how can the Israelis imagine that the Palestinians will accept such violations, and scorn of the international agreements that were concluded?

[Milhim] What is the stand of the cosponsors of the peace conference?

['Abd-Rabbuh] We made a decision yesterday calling on the cosponsors to immediately hold a meeting. This is because after the meeting between President Yasir 'Arafat and Shim'on Peres a few days ago and after the statements we have become accustomed to hear at news conferences reemphasizing the abidance by the Declaration of Principles and the need to implement it, immediately after this by one or two days, the new settlement campaign began in al-Khidr village, in Ma'ale Adumim area, and in other areas. All this is a sign that what is said differs from what is done. That's why we invited the cosponsors to directly assume their responsibility and see whether there is really an agreement or not because, in practice, there is no longer any agreement that is valid and respected by the Israeli side.

[Milhim] It is obvious that the Israeli government still acts with the logic of the pre-Oslo stage. What about the detainees. The Ministerial Council yesterday made several decisions. What about the detainees?

['Abd-Rabbuh] Several decisions were made, the most important dealt with the issues of settlements and the detainees. So far, what has been agreed on, even in the Cairo agreement, concerning the detainees has not been fully implemented. Israel prevaricates and maneuvers, and offers unfounded excuses. We reached agreement on a joint committee on the issue of detainees to discuss all these questions. But, the Israeli side obstructed and delayed this. As you know, during brother Abu-'Ammar's [Yasir 'Arafat] meeting with Peres a few days ago, it was agreed to revive the detainees committee, perhaps, in the next few days. [passage omitted]

PLO: Banning Jerusalem Activity Contravenes DOP

JN2712073094 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The PLO has said that the bill passed yesterday by the Israeli Knesset banning any official PLO activity in holy Jerusalem contravenes the Declaration of Principles [DOP] signed with Israel in Oslo in 1993.

'Urayqat on Law Banning PLO Activity in Jerusalem

JN2612170994 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 26 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government in the Palestinian Authority, by unidentified correspondent; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] Dr. Sa'ib.

['Urayqat] Good evening.

[Correspondent] Good evening. This evening, the Israeli Knesset passed a bill banning PLO activity in Jerusalem. What is the reaction of the National Authority to this?

['Urayqat] I believe such bills will have no effect. The PLO represents the conscience of the Palestinian people and the side that expresses their legitimate national rights. Israel can issue decisions and laws as it likes, but the aspirations, ambitions, and struggle of our Palestinian people in Jerusalem are geared toward achieving and entrenching national identity by establishing our independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

On the other hand, such a tempest in a teapot aims to throw dust in our eyes. The dangers threatening the peace process are not represented by the activities of Orient House and the other Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem, but by the escalating settlement activities, such as the confiscation of land, expanding settlements, and building new settlements in Jerusalem. The dangers threatening the peace process are represented by the measures of this government, which speaks about peace in English and, at the same time, gives orders in Hebrew to expand settlements and seize lands. This takes place in Jerusalem, al-Khidr, Husan, Nabulus, and Ramallah. All these matters mean the peace process is at stake.

[Correspondent] Does this bill mean closing Orient House?

['Urayqat] I do not think so. I do not know how can you prevent a person from expressing himself and his opinion. The Palestinian people in Jerusalem have expressed their stand through the struggle which has been going on for 27 years, because Jerusalem is an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967. The issue of Jerusalem to us is a political and sovereign issue. Palestinians seek to liberate Jerusalem to make it the capital of the independent Palestinian state. [passage omitted]

'Urayqat Interviewed on al-Khidr Land Dispute

JN2512192694 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government in the Palestinian Authority, by unidentified correspondent in al-Khidr village on 25 December]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, good evening.

['Urayqat] Good evening.

[Correspondent] You are now in al-Khidr village where the Israeli settlers aim to seize land.

['Urayqat] Yes.

[Correspondent] Dr. Sa'ib, you were here yesterday, and you are also here today. What is going on al-Khidr village?

['Urayqat] The truth is that what is taking place in al-Khidr village is very serious. At instructions from President Yasir 'Arafat, we came here yesterday and today, to our people in al-Khidr village, to share them their struggle to safeguard their land. The issue is related to 500 donums that are owned by the people of al-Khidr village. The issue is that there are documents from the Israeli authorities that show these lands are owned by the people of al-Khidr. However, we were astonished today that the Israeli Civil Administration issued warnings to the owners of these lands calling on them, verbatim, to sign papers to relinquish these lands. The issue is not that of a settler breaking the law, as the Israeli Government claims—the one violating the law and seeking to seize these lands is the Israeli Government itself. It is the Israeli Government that joined the negotiations that stipulate the freezing of settlement activities in full.

[Correspondent] What does this mean?

['Urayqat] This is very serious. At President Yasir 'Arafat's instructions, we have collected all the documents on the ownership of lands. This issue will be at the top of the agenda of the Higher Liaison Committee's meeting within the next few days. Just as what happened during the Jiftlik lands problem, we will officially put the issue at the negotiating table, while at the same time we will also support the joint struggle of the al-Khidr people. This land must be cultivated and invested by its owners. The Palestinian Authority has decided to support this issue in the fullest sense of the word. [passage omitted]

Minister: Talks Will End if Settlements Expanded

TA2612131794 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 26 Dec 94 p 2

[Report by Bill Hutman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Palestinians will halt the peace process if Israel goes ahead with the new neighborhood in Efrat, on which work began last week, Palestinian Authority Information Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh declared yesterday.

'Abd-Rabbuh warned that the threat to halt the peace talks also applied to other Israeli development plans in the administered territories and eastern Jerusalem.

He was speaking at a protest in Bayt Sahur against the project at Har Homa, in southeastern Jerusalem, on which work is scheduled to begin soon. The protest was incorporated into the annual Christmas march from Shepherds' Field, through the largely Christian village.

The High Court of Justice recently rejected a petition by residents of Bayt Sahur and the surrounding area, who claimed the land was illegally confiscated from them.

"If the settlement activity moves forward, the peace process will not go forward," 'Abd-Rabbuh told a cheering crowd of more than 1,000, including several dozen Peace Now activists.

"This is not a slogan. This is a policy. Israel must understand this," he said. He said a message to this effect was presented to Israel by PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat.

The candle-lit march ended at a square in Bayt Sahur that looks up at Har Homa, where the Housing Ministry is funding the construction of the new Jewish neighborhood.

"We must all work together to stop this construction. Only this way can there be true peace," said Ghassan 'Andali, a protest organizer.

Cabinet To Address UNSC on Israeli Settlements

JN2512084094 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Authority's [NA] Council of Ministers has called on the peace cosponsors to immediately meet to discuss the Israeli violations of the Declaration of Principles.

In a statement issued at the end of its weekly meeting yesterday, the Council said that the expansionist and settlement policy in the West Bank and Jerusalem violates the peace agreement. The Council decided to set up a higher committee for the protection of the land and to follow up the settlement expansion issue on all levels and with all means.

The NA Council of Ministers yesterday discussed in detail the Israeli settlement activities, particularly in the suburbs of Jerusalem, the al-Khidr village, Qalqilyah and Nabulus. The Council viewed these activities as very grave incidents that seek to transform the occupied West Bank into settlement islands.

The Council of Ministers decided to immediately resort to the UN Security Council as this is a very serious shift in the Israeli stand which violates international legitimacy.

Following the NA Council of Ministers meeting, Culture and Information Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh and Local

Government Minister Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat left for al-Khidr village to inspect on the ground the site that the Israeli settlers seek to seize for the establishment of a new settlement complex in the village. 'Abd- Rabbuh called on all national forces and institutions to support and assist al-Khidr inhabitants.

Cabinet Discusses 'Arafat-Peres Meeting, Settlements

JN2412185294 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat chaired the weekly meeting of the National Authority's Council of Ministers at the president's headquarters in Gaza today. The Council of Ministers discussed the results of President Yasir 'Arafat's meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres as well as the results of the negotiations on the legislative elections, the Israeli forces' withdrawal from the Palestinian cities and villages, and their redeployment outside residential areas.

At the end of its meetings, the Council of Ministers issued a statement noting the issues on the agenda. The council held a lengthy discussion on the Israeli expansionist policy in the occupied territories, particularly in the city of Jerusalem.

The ministers stressed that this policy is a serious violation of the entire peace process in general, and of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement in particular, which forbids violation of the final status issues, especially since Jerusalem and settlements are at the first of these issues.

The statement stressed the Council of Ministers' full rejection of the settlement and expansionist policy, and noted that unless the settlement and expansionist policy stops, peace with the Palestinians will become devoid of any meaning. The council held the Israeli Government responsible for the consequences of all this.

The Council of Ministers addressed the peace cosponsors, the United States and Russia, as well as to Norway and the EC which hosted the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and the international community, saying that this policy, which is characterized by collusion between the army and settlers, is an extremely serious issue, because it seeks to turn the area into settlement islands.

The council stressed that settlement as a whole is a hostile and illegitimate action which must be stopped. The council called on the peace cosponsors to hold an immediate meeting, which includes the Palestinian and Israeli sides, to discuss this issue and the serious deviation from the Declaration of Principles.

The statement said that the Council of Ministers puts this issue at the top of its priorities in light of the threat it poses to the Palestinian situation and the peace process.

Five Injured Following Attack on Janin Mayor

TA2612132794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In Janin, five locals were wounded, one of them seriously, by shots fired by one of the Janin mayor's bodyguards. Eyewitnesses reported that the bodyguard fired the shots after several people who attended a local auction near the city hall attacked the mayor, claiming he is a collaborator. This was reported by our correspondent Dani Zaqen.

Algeria

Reportage on Hijacking of Air France Airbus

Four People Seize Airbus

LD2412142094 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Four people seized an Air France Airbus at Houari Boumediene Airport this morning. Interior Minister Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif immediately headed for the airport accompanied by the director-general of national security to personally review the developments of the case.

The interior minister has formed a crisis team at the airport headed by himself. The team consists of representatives from the ministries of foreign affairs, health, the general directorate of national security, the general directorate of civil defense, and Air Algerie.

Paris Confirms Report

LD2412131594 Paris LCI Television in French 1300 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] We have just heard that the French Foreign Ministry has confirmed that the Air France plane has been taken over in Algiers and that the crisis unit has been meeting to examine this problem. [passage omitted]

Airport Evacuated; 19 Released

LD2412142794 Paris LCI Television in French 1400 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] More details from Algiers where an Air France plane has been seized since this morning at the airport by four armed men. The plane is an Airbus A-300. It has been seized on the tarmac. It would have taken off at 1115; 271 passengers booked their seats on this flight.

We still have no information on the identity of the hostage-takers and their demands. Nineteen passengers, including 14 women, one man, and four children have been released by the four hostage-takers. Two hundred and fifty people, 12 crew members, and a ground engineer are still on board.

Two French nationals are reported to be on board. They are said to be members of the French diplomatic staff. The plane was expected to land at 1325 at Orly airport.

In Paris, the French Foreign Ministry has confirmed that the plane is blocked in the airport. A crisis unit has been meeting to examine the problem at the Foreign Ministry.

Finally, we have just heard that groups of policemen and firemen have arrived at Houari Boumediene airport. All flights have been cancelled. The plane is reported to have been blocked on the tarmac about 300 meters from the departure lounge.

The airport is reported to have been evacuated in a chaotic way by the Algerian police equipped with Kalashnikov assault rifles.

We will keep you informed about this hostage-taking in our next bulletins.

French Diplomats on Board

NC2412133394 Paris AFP in English 1326 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Paris, Dec 24 (AFP)—Two French diplomats were on board an Air France plane that was captured by armed men at Algiers airport, reliable sources said here Saturday [24 December].

A spokesman for the foreign ministry said he had "no other information."

Armed men prevented the airliner with more than 280 people from taking off from Algiers airport and were holding the plane at the end of the runway, Air France and French officials said.

Eleven More Passengers Released

NC2412161094 Paris AFP in English 1554 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Paris, Dec 23 (AFP)—Gunmen who seized a French airliner with 271 passengers on board at Algiers airport Saturday [24 December] released 11 more passengers, an Air France spokesman said.

The four hijackers freed six women, two men and three children after 19 passengers of the Airbus A300 had been set free earlier Saturday.

Their nationality was not immediately known.

Hijackers Execute 'Several'

NC2412192894 Paris AFP in English 1907 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algiers, Dec 24 (AFP)—Up to seven people were killed when four armed men hijacked a French airliner at Algiers airport, witnesses said, and a released passenger said the men had executed "several passengers."

Initial reports, for which no confirmation was immediately available, said three people had been killed by the hostage-takers, and a further report, still without confirmation, said seven people had died in the shooting.

A young woman who was along 42 passengers released earlier said she "stepped over two bodies" as she got out of the plane.

"They are armed, they are holding Islamic prayers inside the plane, and have handed out headscarves for women to veil themselves," she said.

The four gunmen who seized the plane just before midday (1100 GMT) were still holding 229 passengers and 12 crew hostage eight hours later. Some of the released passengers, visibly in a state of shock, were taken from the airport by relatives in cars.

Two bursts of gunfire were heard from the airport, where the plane was still grounded on the tarmac. Some reports indicated that the hostage-takers were armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles, pistols and grenades. They were wearing aircraft maintenance uniforms. No official confirmation of these events was available from the Algerian authorities.

In France, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur said everything would be done to end the ordeal of the passengers, said to include two French diplomats. Speaking at Chamonix in the French Alps, Balladur cautioned that the hostage-taking was happening "in a foreign country and under the authority of a foreign government."

Foreign Minister Alain Juppe was briefing Balladur and the interior ministry constantly on the latest developments at Algiers airport, a spokesman for the foreign ministry said. He held a crisis meeting at the ministry Saturday afternoon.

Passenger Recounts Shootings

LD2412195994 Paris France-2 Television Network in French 1900 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An Air France Airbus aircraft has been prevented by four armed men from leaving Algiers airport. According to the latest reports, two passengers are reported to have been shot by the abductors. Patricia Coste reports:

[Coste] [passage omitted] A teenager who has just been released said—while still suffering from shock: I stepped over two bodies when I got off the plane. The abductors are armed. They deliver Islamic sermons on the plane, and they have distributed head scarves for women to cover their heads. The passengers who have been executed were taken out onto the gangway and killed, according to the young woman. She was not able to say how many people were killed: It is terrible. I heard gunshots. People are panicking on the plane; everybody is terrified. They are young, between 20 and 25 years old, the young woman said, describing the four men. One of them is completely crazy.

In addition, reliable sources in Paris have said that two passengers who have been taken hostage have been shot and thrown into the baggage hold of the plane. They can be seen from the runway because the door of the baggage hold is open. They are still moving, but no assistance can be given to them since the terrorists have shot at the police cars that have tried to get nearer. This is all we can say this evening.

AFP: 55 Released

LD2412200594 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In a APS report which we have just received, 55 passengers [from the hijacked Airbus] have been released, including 29 women and 10 children.

The TV team on the spot has taken these pictures of some of the plane's passengers being released this afternoon. [Video shows women and children being led away]

We will keep you informed of any information we receive in our upcoming bulletins.

Cherif Statement on Hijacking

LD2412234394 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 2104 GMT 24 Dec 94

[Statement by Interior Minister Abderrahamne Meziane Cherif on Air France Airbus hijacking incident to correspondents, including question and answer session, in Algiers on 24 December—recorded; Cherif speaks in French]

[FBIS Translated Text] As from 1430 this afternoon, four terrorists—we believe to be four—infiltrated various control barricades. After making sure that all the passengers registered on the Algiers-Paris Air France flight were aboard, they were able to board the plane and have since being holding 232 passengers hostage.

Hour after hour, through the negotiations and the dialogue we have held with them, it has been possible to essentially free 55 women and children. Five minutes ago, two other elderly people, a man and a woman, were freed. It then becomes a hard situation; for the moment we are trying the impossible, to get them to see reason and persuade them to give themselves up, and I think that the next few hours will allow us to achieve this result.

This is the most essential information we have which we believe would be useful to give to you.

[Unidentified correspondent] Are there any victims?

[Cherif] There are two victims, they are the first since the the plane was seized by the four terrorists. For reasons we do not yet know, probably to show how determined they are, they have executed a passenger who turned out to be a policeman with no uniform. Therefore, this was an ordinary passenger, who, according to the information we have, showed some resistance to the hijackers taking the passengers hostages.

The second victim has not yet been identified. So the matter concerns two bodies which are still lying on the gangway, which is still connected to the plane and which we do not want to remove, because this would allow the hijackers to attempt to move the plane and make their way toward the main takeoff runway.

[Correspondent] What are their demands?

[Cherif] The only demand they have is to be able to take off, that is it; they have not indicated their choice. So, for convenience sake, we are in touch with our colleagues in France to reassure them; let us not forget it is Christmas for our colleagues today, and there is an obvious and understandable irritation. We have done everything in order to calm them and explain to them the situation we are experiencing in Algiers as accurately as possible. I thank you.

[Correspondent] Is it true that there is a former minister inside the plane?

[Cherif] No.

[Correspondent] Is there a French diplomat among the passengers?

[Cherif] No.

[Correspondent] What are the nationalities of the passengers?

[Cherif] The vast majority of the passengers are Algerian, the crew are French, as you know. There are two officials of the French Embassy, two or three Tunisians I believe, and a Vietnamese.

[Correspondent] It is said that the Vietnamese was killed.

[Cherif] We have no precise information on this. That is all. We will do our utmost to keep you informed as events develop.

[Correspondent] Are talks in progress?

[Cherif] Yes, negotiations are in progress. Is that alright?

[Correspondent] What are your intentions?

[Cherif] Well, we are concerned with preserving the lives of the passengers and avoiding any an irreparable damage to the plane or to human lives.

[Correspondent] Are the passengers well?

[Cherif] Yes, very well.

[Correspondent] Have they allowed the passengers to receive food supplies, blankets?

[Cherif] Yes, yes, the passengers have settled down, everything is fine.

[Correspondent] Do the terrorists claim to belong to an organization?

[Cherif] They are terrorists!

[Correspondent] Do you mean Islamists?

[Cherif] They are terrorists. What is there origin, their objectives? We do not know; we know they are terrorists. This is it. I thank you.

One Hijacker Identified

NC2512060894 Paris AFP in English 0238 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algiers, Dec 25 (AFP) - Suspected Islamic militants early Saturday [24 December] commandeered a French airliner as it was about leave Algiers airport with more than 280 people aboard and executed two of the passengers, dumping their bodies on the tarmac, Algerian officials said.

In Paris an authoritiative source identified the leader of the four-man commando unit as Abdul Abdallah Yahia, a member of the Armed Islamic Group, a militant Algerian Islamic movement, and said his mother was participating in airport negotiations to end the seizure.

He said Yahia, whose followers were armed with at least two Kalashnikov assault rifles and two automatic pistols, was unknown to French intelligence services.

Witnesses reported that another two people had been been shot and pushed into the baggage hold of the Air France Airbus 300, which was surrounded by elite Algerian army troops on the tarmac at Algiers airport.

Some reports spoke of up to seven killings but there was no official confirmation. New shots were heard coming from the aircraft at about 2200 GMT, more than 12 hours after the drama began.

Algerian special forces advanced closer to the aircraft late Saturday after the last series of shots rang out but it was not immediately clear if they planned to storm the airliner.

Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi formed a crisis cell to handle the situation and Interior Minister Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif was at Algiers airport supervising negotiations.

The four men, dressed in airport maintenance uniforms, took control of the airliner as it was preparing to taxi for takeoff to Paris at 11:15 a.m. (1015 GMT), Cherif said. The plane was carrying 271 passengers and a crew of 12.

They later freed 63 people, according to reliable sources in Paris, who added that at least one and possibly two French diplomats were aboard the plane.

Cherif, who confirmed the presence of two diplomats, said the gunmen shot and killed two passengers and dumped their bodies on the tarmac. One of the victims was identified as an off-duty Algerian policeman, while details on the second victim were not immediately available.

One released passenger said the hijackers had executed "several passengers."

"They are armed, they are holding Islamic prayers inside the plane, and have handed out headscarves for women to veil themselves," said a woman who was freed.

Islamic extremists have been waging a nearly three-year war to topple the military backed secular government in Algiers.

The government says more than 10,000 have been killed in the violence, which erupted after the government cancelled the second round of Algeria's first multi-party elections just as an Islamic party appeared certain to win.

The most radical of the armed Moslem groups have targeted foreigners and foreign companies, notably French, in their campaign to isolate the Algiers government.

French officials in Paris said France had offered Algeria "all necessary means" to resolve the hostage drama. It was not clear if the Algerians had taken up the offer.

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, speaking from his vacation home in the French Alps, said: "Everything will be done to come to the aid of the hostages." But he added that the incident was taking place "in a foreign country and under the authority of a foreign government."

Cherif said the four hijackers had demanded to fly out of Algiers but had not specified their destination. He declined to say if authorities had agreed to the demand.

He stressed that Algerian authorities were continuing to negotiate with the gunmen and said late Saturday he hoped to resolve the drama "in the coming hours."

The young woman who was released said the gunmen had taken several passengers out onto the passenger gangway to be executed.

"It was terrible, I heard the shots, there was panic inside the plane, everyone was terrorised," she said.

The men "are young, between 20 and 25 roughly," she continued, trembling with emotion. "One of them is completely mad."

Some of the released passengers, visibly in a state of shock, were taken from the airport by relatives.

Hijackers Issue 'Ultimatum'

NC2512072994 Paris AFP in English 0725 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Paris, Dec 25 (AFP) - Suspected Islamic militants holding a French airliner with more than 200 people aboard Sunday [25 December] issued an ultimatum calling for the release before 10:00 a.m. (0900 GMT) of two Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) leaders under house arrest in Algiers, reliable sources here said.

The hijackers, who seized the plane at Algiers airport Saturday, also repeated their demand that they be allowed to fly out of Algiers, the sources said.

Six More Passengers Said Released

LD2512092894 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The latest in the case of the French Airbus plane detained by four gunmen, 20 hours since its detention at the new Houari Boumediene international airport—six more hostages have been released. This brings the total of hostages freed to 63, most of whom were Algerian nationals.

Our envoy at the airport tells us that Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi returned to the airport this morning to follow up the developments of the case from close quarters. [passage omitted]

Our correspondent at the scene has told us that negotiations continue to this moment.

The interior minister said last night that there might be some positive results in the coming hours.

Negotiations Continue

LD2512073594 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] On the developments in the case of the French Air-Bus airliner held up by four gunmen yesterday afternoon, there is nothing new since the statement by Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif, minister of interior and local communities. What is known is that those freed—63 passengers—were all of Algerian nationality and that there had been two victims, one of them was a policeman who tried to stop the four terrorists from holding up the passengers and the other victim was a civilian whose identity has not been confirmed.

Our envoy at the scene reports that negotiations continue at this time between the crisis cell, headed by the prime minister, and the kidnappers.

About the demand of the four terrorist kidnappers, the minister of interior confirmed that their sole demand was to allow them to take off; however, no destination has been specified.

Ultimatum Dropped

NC2512111394 Paris AFP in English 1047 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algiers, Dec 25 (AFP)—Suspected Islamic militants holding a French airliner in Algiers with more than 200 people on board have dropped an ultimatum demanding the release of two Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) leaders, an Algerian interior minister official said Sunday [25 December].

He said the hijackers were now only demanding that the plane be allowed to take off.

The official said one of two passengers executed by the gunmen Saturday was believed to be Vietnamese, the other was an Algerian police officer who was killed at the outset of the hijacking. Their bodies were still on the gangway.

The Algerian official said that several deadlines issued during the night—which were not announced to reporters—had been pushed back and that negotiations were continuing uninterrupted. Contacts were believed to be by radio as no envoy had been seen entering the plane by journalists at the scene.

On Sunday morning the hijackers gave authorities until 10 a.m. (0900 GMT) to release FIS president Abassi Madani and his deputy Ali Belhadj, who are both under house arrest.

That demand had now been dropped, the official said.

The situation was calm on the blocked off runway at around GMT [time as received] as the ultimatum expired.

The official also said that there were five hijackers, not four as had been reported until now, and that four of them had been "identified."

He added that the plane had been cleaned and given fresh supplies, without specifying whether this was food or refuelling.

The FIS leaders Madani and Belhadj were arrested in June 1991 and sentenced to 12 years in jail in July 1992 for offences against the state but released from Blida military prison in September to be held under arrest in their own homes.

Hijackers Reportedly From GIA

LD2512112894 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] On the developments in the case of the hijacked French Air Bus plane detained at Houari Boumediene International Airport, we have just received a report by our correspondent Mesoud Bouletiour:

[Bouletiour] An Interior Ministry official revealed a while ago that the identity of the hijackers is now known. They belong to the Armed Islamic Group [GIA]. There are four or five of them. They are known to the authorities and are on the records of the security services. This official confirmed that the mother of the group's leader has been asked to help with the negotiations. This resulted in the release of more hostages, and thus far 63 hostages have been released.

About the group's main demand, the same source confirmed that the demands have been changing; initially they demanded the release of the Shaykhs, but they changed their mind and later pressed for the plane's chocks to be removed so that the plane can take off for another country. However, the same source said that this is impossible because the members of the group have been told that there is no country that can receive the plane.

Concerning the two persons who have been murdered, our source confirmed that the identity of the second murdered person has been established—he is a Vietnamese national. The first person killed was an Algerian policeman.

As for the deadline, this source confirmed that a deadline has been repeated but the members of the group never at all threatened to harm the lives of the hostages.

In conclusion, he confirmed that negotiations to secure the release of the remaining hostages—about 166 of them, including women and children—continue. This morning the armed group allowed the plane to be supplied with drinking water and food.

Hijackers' 'Itinerary' Noted

LD2512145194 Paris France-Info Radio in French 1430 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A crisis meeting is taking place at Matignon this afternoon. Meanwhile passengers are still being held hostage in Algiers. [passage omitted]

At Houari Boumedienne Airport the situation has not developed much over the last couple of hours. According to an Algerian journalist, the Islamic commando intends to fly off to Paris and then to Germany, but the Algerian authorities won't let them take off. More details from another Algerian journalist with the daily, LIBERTE:

[Unidentified correspondent] As long as the gangway is connected to the plane, they will not be able to take off. The Algerian authorities have so far refused to remove the gangway to prevent the plane from taking off. The airport is still cordoned off. Shots were fired throughout the night. Shots were fired by the hijackers at the control tower and in all directions. For the moment we are still waiting. I think that they [not further specified] have been allowed to retrieve the bodies of the two dead persons.

Hijackers' Invitation to Media

LD2512165294 Paris France-Info Radio in French 1600 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Air France Airbus aircraft is still being held at Algiers airport. The plane has been held since yesterday at noon by five terrorists who say they belong to the Armed Islamic Group. They are still holding some 160 passengers and crew members—fewer people than was reported earlier since we have just heard that some 40 passengers missed their plane yesterday. [passage omitted]

We have also heard that the commando tried to have journalists board the plane. One Algerian correspondent comments:

[Begin unidentified correspondent recording] I was among those who were supposed to board the plane. The hijackers do not want the ongoing situation to continue in Algeria, where journalists are against Muslim fundamentalists. They have this foreboding.... [pauses]. For them, the Algerian media cannot accurately report on the situation. When the hijackers thought that they were going to leave for Paris, they knew that there would be significant reportage in the media. Unfortunately, the deal—if I may put it this way—could not take place because.... [pauses] without the presence of the foreign media, they refused. [as heard] [end recording]

Shots Heard Inside Plane

LD2512201094 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Over 30 hours of waiting and anguish have elapsed since the holdup of the Air France Airbus in Houari Boumedienne International Airport by five armed terrorists. Contacts with the hijackers have not stopped since dawn today and have led to the release of three more hostages, bringing the number of released hostages to 63. The plane and its passengers are now at the airport and these are pictures taken a short while ago with our correspondent Khalil Yahia:

[Begin Yahia recording] The French airliner hijacked since yesterday is still in its original place, opposite the airport VIP lounge. The armed hijackers have released three hostages, two women and a man, who were transported in a police and civil protection vehicle. Two of these units are stationed inside and outside the airport.

The media, who are pointing their cameras at a spot about 500 meters away, are expecting new developments at any time.

The plane's rear door is opened very carefully every one to two hours. Contacts are intense between the hijackers and the crisis commission through the airport's control tower.

At about 1735 [1635 GMT], the stairway was moved from the southern rear side to the northern rear side of the plane. The information that has been circulating is that the two parties might have reached an agreement on the release of a number of hostages. At about 1803 [1703 GMT] three shots were heard inside the plane.

It has been learned from sources at the Ministry of Interior that the three passengers recently released are Guolmane Melinda, Bakhta Mama, and Taghlili Othmane. The Interior Ministry published the names of 60 people who have been released since Saturday, which include 34 women and 10 children. [end recording]

French Victim Named

LD2612001594 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0000 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Regarding developments in the Airbus plane, which is on the ground at Houari Boumedienne International Airport, Interior Minister Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif said in a meeting he held with the press 90 minutes ago that the hijacking operation would be finally resolved in the next two hours, at the latest.

On the other hand, the interior minister regretted the assassination of a third hostage. The matter concerns Mr. Eric Bonnier, an official at the French Embassy in Algeria.

Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif also announced that he would meet with journalists two hours from now.

More on French Killing

LD2612002594 Paris France-Info Radio in French 2345 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Report by correspondent Nicholas Poincare in Algiers on 25 December—live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The hostage taking at Algiers airport: the third passenger in the Airbus killed last night in Algiers is reportedly a French national, according to information reported by the official Algerian news agency, APS. Our special correspondent in Algiers, Nicholas Poincare, confirms the news:

[Poincare] At about 2200 [2100 GMT] we saw ambulances approaching the plane, and men climbing the steps on the other side from the control tower and picking up a body. A few moments later, here in this deserted airport, where the atmosphere is very heavy, we saw one of the negotiators, wearing a very serious expression, coming up and saying: They have just killed a third one.

We asked: Do we know who it is?

He said: Yes.

Is it a Frenchman?

Yes.

This man was one of those who has been taking part in the negotiations with the hostage takers for several hours now. He confirmed for us that the third hostage to be killed was a Frenchman. It seems that he was shot on the steps. The body was left on the steps. A few moments later ambulances were able to go and collect the body and bring it back to the airport.

[Announcer] Is everything calm around the Airbus at the moment?

[Poincare] Yes. There have been no new movements. The plane is about 500 meters from the control tower, bathed in light: as well as the normal airport lighting very powerful projectors have been brought up to the plane. There is total darkness inside the plane. We can't see any light through the portholes, except for the cockpit at the very front and a few portholes right at the front of the plane. There is practically no more movement, only from time to time vehicles of the Algerian security forces move forward, drive round the plane [words indistinct] even getting quite close to the plane sometimes, and then go away. The plane's jet engines seem to have been only idling since early evening, simply in order to maintain the power supply inside. There are no other signs indicating that the plane is about to take off.

FIS' Haddam Condemns Attack

LD2612010194 Paris France-Info Radio in French 2315 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Anouar Haddam, the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] spokesman in the United States has condemned the hostage taking at Algiers airport. He believes this action will not serve the cause of the Algerian people. Here is Haddam:

[Begin recording] [Anouar Haddam, chairman of the parliamentary delegation of FIS abroad—identified by caption; speaking by phone from Washington] Algeria is undergoing a planned genocide, being implemented down to the smallest detail in a regime of terror, torture, and silence. However, such an action, whichever party is behind it, will certainly not serve the just cause of the Algerian people.

[Unidentified correspondent] Have you heard that the five members of the commando demanded the release of the two leaders of your movement, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj?

[Haddam] For us, such a demand, given the situation in Algeria, given the tens of thousands of people in prisons, in concentration camps, given that the Algerian people as a whole are imprisoned, I don't think that such a request has come from the mujahidin.

[Correspondent] The members of this commando have apparently been identified as belonging to the GIA [Armed Islamic Group]. Do you know one of them in particular, Abdallah Yahia?

[Haddam] Such a question reflects the fact that, I would say frankly, the French press, the French media, are not helping the Algerian people to emerge from this crisis in Algeria. We have always said we are members of the Islamic Salvation Front, we have no organic link with the armed movement, although we support it unequivocally, we have no organic link, so we don't know. We don't have any precise information as to who is behind this action. It remains to be proved who is behind it.

[Correspondent] It appears that they are members of the GIA?

[Haddam] It appears. A lot of things have appeared in the past, and unfortunately when reality proves the opposite the press don't issue a denial of what they said before, so we repeat that we have no information about who is behind this action. If, and I stress if, this act is indeed being carried out by fighters for liberty, it would express the degree of frustration, I would say, of our people, with regards to France. [end recording]

Captain Said To Reject Rescue

LD2612033194 Paris France-Info Radio in French 0300 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Algerian minister of the interior made an accusation against the captain of the Air France plane. He accused him of thwarting [faire echouer] an operation to release the passengers. The minister accused the captain of thwarting an operation which, he claimed, should have ended up as early as Saturday [24 December] with the release of all the passengers and six members of the crew.

Plane Departs

LD2612132394 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] The plane left Houari Boumedienne International Airport at 0200 this morning after it was allowed by the Algerian authorities to take off in order to protect lives and prevent more killings. This was stated by Interior Minister Abderrahmane Miziane Cherif at a news conference before the plane took off. [passage omitted]

Miziane Cherif denied that the French Government exercised pressure to secure the plane's departure.

Asked whether Algeria will pursue the hijackers, Miziane Cherif said the Algerian Government has to defend its interests and citizens, and that it is determined to carry out its duties and exercise its rights.

He said the Algerian Government will demand that the hijackers be handed over if they are arrested in France. He said they are members of the Islamic Armed Group.

The interior minister said he is convinced that allowing the plane to take off will not be regarded as setting a precedent, but that the Algerian Government would have preferred the issue to be settled in Algerian territory.

He said the French Government is now responsible for dealing with the issue.

Government Efforts Noted

LD2612194694 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Foreign Ministry spokesman announced today that the crisis commission, formed after the seizure of the French plane and headed by the head of government and the membership of the ministers of foreign affairs, interior, transport, and health, and a representative from the Ministry of National Defense, was closely following up on the development of the plane issue after it left Algeria.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman pointed out that the efforts of the Algerian authorities, which led to the release of 64 hostages, most of whom were women and children, gave utmost importance to preserving the lives of the hostages.

The spokesman added that an Air Algerie plane was ready to take off at any time to transport the passengers who were taken hostages. He pointed out that a crisis commission has been formed at the Algerian Embassy in Paris under the chairmanship of the Algerian ambassador.

The same measures have also been taken in Marseilles, where the Algerian consul general is in direct contact with the French authorities in charge of the negotiations.

The Algerian authorities are also in contact with their French counterparts until it is certain that the measures adopted would lead to a happy ending to the hostage-taking.

Cherif Holds News Conference

LD2612232994 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Now that the terrorism that accompanied the seizure of the French plane has ended, Algerian Interior Minister Cherif held a news conference this evening in which he reviewed the painful stages of the incident. He stressed Algeria's experience in such situations, the contributions it has made in similar conditions, and the suitable measures adopted by the government in the interest of preserving the passengers' lives. This is the complete recording of the statement of the interior minister which he gave at the news conference before allowing journalists' questions.

[Begin Cherif recording] Tragic and regrettable events have taken place over the past two days at Houari Boumedienne International Airport in the capital of Algiers. It was a contemptible act in which hostages were held on an Air France plane ready to take off for Paris. [passage omitted]

Pending a peaceful solution to this situation, we had great hopes of releasing a larger number of hostages, except that various interventions prevented that. It was very easy for our security forces to carry out one of the prepared plans for such situations, but our constant concern was to prevent exposing the hostages' lives to a more danger. [passage omitted]

It was axiomatic that we were in contact with the French authorities, bearing in mind that the plane and crew were French, and it was heading to France. Algeria had agreed to allow the plane to take off. Thus, the head of state made the decision to allow the plane to leave on the basis of all information available to us. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Council of Ministers Condemns Terrorism

LD2512214294 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Council of Ministers convened today under the chairmanship of head of state Liamine Zeroual. Before studying the agenda, the council heard a report by the interior minister on the Air France plane held by a group of terrorists at Algiers airport.

The council expressed its strong condemnation of the savage action and the holding of Algerian citizens and foreign nationals. It also expressed its sincere condolences to the families of the two victims who were killed during the criminal action.

The state is determined not to spare any effort to resolve the issue, bearing in mind that its main wish is to protect the lives of the innocent.

In addition to other issues and loan agreements, the council debated and endorsed two draft proposals concerning the revision of the penal code and the criminal proceedings law with a view to submitting them to the Transitional National Council.

The aim of revising the penal code is to include legal definitions of terrorism, sabotage, and the punishment to be prescribed for the perpetrators of those acts.

The Council of Ministers also studied a draft proposal on clemency measures for those who choose to repent.

These measures include not taking legal action against members of terrorist groups who declare their repentance and who had not committed crimes that led to death, permanent disability, physical injury of citizens, or the destruction of public property.

Legal action will not be taken against repentant people who had carried arms or handled explosives or other material, and who would voluntarily hand them over to the authorities.

Finally, sentences would be reduced for people who declare their repentance and confess involvement in other crimes.

This decision includes provisions that are more lenient for the benefit of the youth up to 22 years, members of the armed groups who choose to repent. [passage omitted: Zeroual recalls his address to the nation on the 40th anniversary of the November revolution in which he reminded the youth that their true mission lay in building their homeland. The council of ministers also discussed and assessed educational and vocational training files, and called for their improvement. Zeroual announced his decision to set up the higher education council during the first two months of 1995.

The head of state said: I would also like to take this opportunity to touch on the Berber language, about which the prime minister has talked on a number of occasions in the name of the government, and made ample efforts to settle it. This legitimate demand has found positive response from the state, and has been given a rational framework to embody it. This framework is represented by the national committee which was set up last 4 October. Thus, the citizens' will and the state's readiness coincided on this issue. One should be concerned that the teaching of this language would actually serve in promoting this national heritage. I stress again the state's sincere desire to give the Berber language its position in the educational system. [passage omitted]

In the end, the Council of Ministers examined the file for preparing the presidential elections. In this respect, the head of state said: The presidential elections which would be organized before the end of next year are considered an important date within the framework of the national reform to which we have committed ourselves. This means that achieving this goal, which is within the reach of the state, requires serious and comprehensive preparations to which our country has previously committed itself. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Musa Heads Delegation Leaving for Riyadh

NC2312162494 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa left Cairo today for Riyadh to chair Egypt's delegation to the Egyptian-Saudi joint committee meetings, which will start tomorrow. The Saudi delegation is expected to be chaired by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal.

Prior to departure, Mr. 'Amr Musa stated that he will hold a meeting this evening with his Saudi counterpart in which he will discuss the development of events in the Middle East in light of efforts being exerted to push the peace process forward, as well as topics pertaining to the coming meeting of the foreign ministers of the Damascus Declaration countries expected to be held in Cairo in mid-January. In addition, they will discuss developments in the Arab arena and the results of the Islamic summit in Casablanca. [passage omitted]

Returns From Riyadh

NC2512185894 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1805 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 25 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa returned to Cairo this evening after a three-day visit to Riyadh during which he chaired the Egyptian delegation to the meetings of the sixth session of the joint Egyptian-Saudi committee.

Upon his return, Musa said the Egyptian delegation's visit was very fruitful. He said he had held important talks with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and other Saudi officials. He stressed that the meetings of the joint committee helped boost bilateral relations in the field of trade and investment. He added that the postponement of the meetings of the Damascus Declaration states from January to February is due to the previous commitments of some states.

Musa Denies Iraqi Foreign Minister To Visit

NC2512124294 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1220 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 25 Dec (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has denied any arrangements for a visit to Cairo by Iraqi Foreign Minister Sa'id al-Sahhaf before the end of December.

Musa was replying to a question during a press conference he held at the Saudi Foreign Ministry headquarters in Riyadh today. "We have not arranged any visit by the Iraqi foreign minister. This is not projected, and I have not heard anything like that," he said.

Silence on 'Massacres' in Chechnya Denounced

NC2712072494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2120 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Dec (MENA)—AL-WAFD and AL-AHRAM newspapers have denounced the international community's silence about the massacre of Muslims in the Islamic Chechen Republic.

In its editorial Tuesday, AL-WAFD says the heinous massacres being committed against the Chechen Republic's Muslims are not a Russian internal affair, as seen by the United States, France, and Britain. Rather it is a cause of nationalities that want to get rid of the hegemony and oppression of Russia and its Army, who seek to restore their influence and reputation as the second strongest military power in the world. Therefore, Russia is venting its anger and turning its arsenal toward this Muslim nation, which represents a minority among other Russian nations.

The paper asks if the United States has not yet intervened on the pretext that what is happening in Chechnya is an internal affair of the Russian Government, why then did U.S. fleets and armies move to unseat this or that leader in Latin American countries?

AL-WAFD stresses that what is taking place in Chechnya is part of what is being suffered by Muslims in numerous countries, some of which we are witnessing in Bosnia, Burma, and the southern Philippines.

The paper concludes its editorial by asking: Will the international silence remain dominant? Will the international community leave the Chechen Muslims under the Russian executioner's mercy? What are the Islamic countries doing? Or is silence the prevalent character in the world these days?

For its part, AL-AHRAM says the escalation of the Russian military campaign against Chechnya is very serious and that the Russian air raids on the capital of Groznyy are intensifying despite Russia's superiority over the Chechens.

In its editorial Tuesday, the paper notes that capturing Groznyy will not end the conflict entirely because numerous other republics and nationalities in the Caucuses, especially the neighboring Ingoshitya republic, might back the Chechens' struggle against Russia. Besides, AL-AHRAM says, there is a strong Chechen community in Moscow itself that may be able to commit effective acts of violence against the Russian authorities to protest the flagrant transgressions in Chechnya.

Bahraini Defense Minister Arrives on Visit

NC2512122894 Cairo MENA in English 1150 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 25 (MENA)—Bahrain minister of defence and deputy commander in chief of Bahrain's defence force Lt General Kahlifah Bin-Hamad Al Kahlifah arrived here today on a few days' visit to Egypt for talks on means of boosting military cooperation between the two countries.

The visit comes at the invitation of commander in chief of the armed forces and minister of defence and military production field marshal Husayn Tantawi.

Mubarak Receives Minister

NC2612092994 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0852 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Dec (MENA)—This morning President Husni Mubarak received Staff Lieutenant General Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Khalifah, Bahraini defense minister and deputy commander in chief of the Bahrain's defense force, at the presidential palace in Heliopolis. Marshal Muhammad Husayn Tantawi, minister of defense and war production; Staff Colonel Salman 'Isa Bin-Hindi, director at the Bahraini general command; and Mustafa Kamal, Bahraini ambassador in Cairo, also attended the meeting.

'Minor Riots' in Bahrain Viewed

NC2612095294 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0920 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Dec (MENA)—Staff Lieutenant General Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, Bahraini defense minister and deputy commander-in-chief of the Bahraini Defense Force, said after his meeting with President Husni Mubarak this morning that he conveyed a message from Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of Bahrain, to President Mubarak on relations between Egypt and Bahrain.

On the recent incidents in Bahrain, the Bahraini defense minister said the situation in Bahrain is excellent and that what took place was only minor riots that were dealt with within three days.

On reports that 4,000 Saudi troops were sent to Bahrain to contain the situation, the Bahraini defense minister said what happened was something for the police and public security men to deal with. Military forces are not called in for such missions, he said.

He said he will continue his talks with Defense Minister Field Marshal Muhammad Husayn Tantawi today.

Leader of Banned Militant Group Surrenders

NC2612124694 Paris AFP in English 1222 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Dec 26 (AFP)—A wanted leader of the banned militant group al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah has given himself up to the police, the official daily AL-AKHBAR said Monday [26 December].

Ramadan 'Ali Hasan, who was the group's chief in the north of al-Minya province, handed over his weapons to the police and admitted his militant activities, the newspaper said.

The local head of security, General Yusri Shakir, decided to release him, the newspaper said.

Meanwhile, a 31-year-old man died in crossfire when militants attacked a police station in al-Minya's Abu Qurqas village on Sunday, police said.

Two policemen were also wounded in the shooting.

A total of 540 people have died since militants launched a violent campaign in March 1992.

Fundamentalists have switched their operations to al-Minya after being driven out of their former southern stronghold of Asyut by the security forces.

'Terrorists' Killed in Raid on Hideout in Asyut

NC2312192594 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1525 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 23 Dec (MENA)—Two terrorists from among the active elements were killed today in one of the areas of Markaz al-Badari in the Governorate of Asyut, Upper Egypt.

A responsible security source at the Interior Ministry stated that information made available to the State Security Investigations Department affirmed that terrorist Ra'fat Ahmad Muhammad and terrorist Hishmat Basha 'Abd-al-'Alim had been charged previously in case No. 979/94 of the Markaz al-Badari administration and case No. 509/94 of the Markaz al-Badari criminal department. The latter is investigating the assassination of secret policeman 'Adil Muhammad Mubarak and the attack on the police post at al-'Iqal al-Qibli in which two men from the police force were killed. They have also been charged in case No. 1893/94 of al-Badari criminal department.

The responsible security source said that after the state security investigations confirmed that the terrorists were using the cemeteries of the village of Jawa al-Nawawah [name as received] in Markaz al-Badari as a hideout to carry out many of the terrorist operations, the targets of which were soldiers and members of the police force; and based on this information, an operation was carried out by the state security and criminal investigations branch of the Asyut security department and the central security forces after taking the necessary legal measures to storm this hideout at dawn today. The forces were taken by surprise when bullets were fired at them as they approached the hideout. This forced them to fire back. The shoot-out led to the killing of the two above-named terrorists.

A 9-mm revolver was found close to the body of the first terrorist. The numbers on the revolver were indistinct but it bore the police emblem and had three magazines, one of which was empty while the other two were loaded. In addition, 9 locally-made .62 and .39 caliber pistols [as received] were found near the body of the second terrorist.

The prosecution has been informed to proceed with investigations.

Assailant Fires on Police Station, Kills 1

NC2612141494 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1220 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 26 Dec (MENA)—An unidentified assailant has opened fire on the Satim [name as received] police station, under the Abu Qurqas police department in al-Minya. The men guarding the station exchanged fire with the assailant, who managed to escape. This was revealed by an official source in the Ministry of Interior, who said that the shooting incident, which occurred last night, killed one citizen, Muhammad Fathi 'Ata, an employee in the municipal department in the village of Balansurah, who happened to be at the scene.

The incident also wounded regular sentries Thabit Sulwan and Shukri Fahim, who were both taken to the hospital for treatment.

Leading cadres in the al-Minya Security Directorate, the various detective agencies, and the criminology laboratory conducted on-the-spot examinations. The police continue their efforts to arrest the assailant, and the prosecution has been notified to launch an investigation.

Labor Party Official Held for Islamist Leaflets

NC2412192194 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1745 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 24 Dec (MENA)—Counselor Hisham Saraya, the attorney general for the higher state security prosecution, today decided to detain Mr. 'Adil Husayn, the Labor Party secretary general, until tomorrow morning, Sunday, to finish interrogating him.

This statement was announced by Counselor Hisham Saraya. He said that the prosecution confronted 'Adil Husayn with the charges against him—possession of leaflets promoting the Islamic Group's ideology. These were found on him at Cairo Airport in October as he was returning from London.

The prosecution also confronted him with a memo on the investigations by the security organs, which revealed that he was carrying these leaflets with the objective of publishing them in AL-SHA'B to inform other people of their contents because he represents the contact point between the Islamic groups inside and outside Egypt.

The prosecution also produced a letter which was found among the leaflets he was carrying. The letter was from a member of the Islamic Group addressed to 'Adil Husayn, asking him to publish these leaflets.

Counselor Hisham Saraya added that during the interrogation, 'Adil Husayn denied having anything to do with the leaflets. He said that during his travels abroad he went to many cities, but he knows nothing about the leaflets.

Libya

JANA Comment on Extension of Embargo Reported

LD2412142594 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The U.S. White House last night announced the extension of the decision to extend for an extra year the U.S. economic embargo against the Great Jamahiriyah on the pretext that Libya constitutes a threat to U.S. national security. The embargo was first imposed by former U.S. President Reagan in 1986. [passage omitted]

JANA's political editor commented on this by issuing a note which links this measure the U.S. has applied continuously since 1986 with the unjust measures imposed in the name of the so-called [UN] Security Council since 1992. It confirms the invalidity of the reasons for the first U.S. decision, because the U.S. Government based yesterday's announcement on the so-called Lockerbie issue, and this is a fabricated justification to enable the U.S. Government to continue its premeditated enmity against the Great Jamahiriyah.

The editor added that the revelations of the new U.S. decision confirmed clearly and in a tangible manner that the so-called Security Council has changed into a flexible tool in the hand of the U.S. Government to approve its aggressive designs against the peoples. [passage omitted]

This indicates that the United States has changed into an aggressive force with nobody to deter it in a world which we believed was a mere jungle which is above all law, convention, or logic. [passage omitted]

Envoy Said to Contact Warring Parties in Bosnia

LD2412215794 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Hamdi Jusuf-Pasic, the mufti of Muslims in Belgrade, has praised the stances and principles of the the brother leader of the revolution for establishing peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as his persistent eagerness to bring about a peaceful settlement of the destructive war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This was said at a meeting today with Dr. 'Ali al-Turayki, envoy of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation, who has been delegated to contact the three warring parties—Muslims, Serbs, and Croats—to follow up the implementation of the brother leader of the revolution's initiative to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in former Yugoslavia.

Islamic Leaders Concerned Over Chechnya Events

LD2712100594 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0912 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 27 Dec—The leader of the revolution, the leader of the world Islamic popular revolution had separate telephone conversations with Pakistani President Farooq Ahmad Leghari, Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, and Bangladesh President Abdur Rahman Biswas, during which they expressed the Islamic world's concern over the massacres to which Muslims in Chechnya are being subjected. They also expressed their concern and anxiety over a possible break in relations between Russia and the Islamic world.

Contacts are continuing between the world Islamic popular leadership and leaders of the Islamic world.

AL-Qadhdhafi Receives Letter From Bosnian President

LD2412213194 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The brother leader of the revolution has received Ahmet Halilovic, personal envoy of President Alia Izetbegovic of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The envoy handed a letter from the Bosnian president to the brother leader of the revolution.

Bahrain

Ties With Iran Said 'Soured' Over Internal Incidents

NC2312213294 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Bahrain has recalled its ambassador in Tehran for consultations with Foreign Ministry officials. An official statement says Bahraini Ambassador to Iran Sami Khalil al-Mu'ayyad returned to Manama yesterday.

Informed diplomatic sources say relations between the two countries have soured over some recent internal incidents in Bahrain. A statement by the Bahraini Interior Ministry said earlier that the incidents were accompanied by an organized foreign media and propaganda campaign. Moreover, Iran spread some misleading rumors to increase tension and escalate the situation.

Iran Cites Opposition Leader on 'Bloody Confrontations'

LD2412133794 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] German news agency in Beirut has quoted Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Mahfuz, secretary-general of Bahrain's Islamic Liberation Front, the BILF, as saying that the bloody confrontations in Bahrain have left four dead and a number of wounded. He commented that the unrest will intensify.

Shaykh 'Ali al-Mahfuz then predicted that the tense situation in Bahrain will bring about dire consequences. The secretary-general of the BILF has accused Britain and Saudi Arabia of helping the security forces in crushing people's uprising.

Liberation Front Leader on Opposition Demands

JN2512191294 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1730 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Interview with Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Mahfuz, secretary general of the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, by Antoine Constantine in Beirut; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Constantine] Your Eminence Shaykh Muhammah 'Ali al-Mahfuz, secretary general of the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain: During your current visit to Beirut you have met with Shiite leaders at a time when Bahrain is witnessing serious events. What has prompted you to come to Lebanon?

[Al-Mahfuz] We move from one place to another to meet with friends to give a picture of the situation and events taking place in our country, particularly in these days that are witnessing a comprehensive popular uprising.

[Constantine] When did you leave Bahrain?

[Al-Mahfuz] We left Bahrain a long time ago. Many people are not allowed to return to the country. The opposition, inside and outside the country, has called for ending the measures that prevent the citizens from reentering the country.

[Constantine] Did you leave Bahrain more than a year ago?

[Al-Mahfuz] Yes, I left Bahrain more than a year ago.

[Constantine] In your proposals, do your solutions call for changing the regime? And on what basis do you want to change the regime?

[Al-Mahfuz] We presented a number of clear demands that we, as well as our partners in the Bahraini opposition, adopt. [words indistinct] First, we call for applying democracy; second, guaranteeing basic liberties; third, respecting basic human rights; fourth, holding free and fair comprehensive elections; and fifth, laying down a modern Constitution to meet the requirements of the age.

[Constantine] Do you agree with the reports that Iran stands behind the Bahraini opposition, particularly with the presence of a Shiite majority in Bahrain. Are these reports correct?

[Al-Mahfuz] This is baseless, because the events are internal. It is a popular uprising that raises a number of clear demands. The reports that the uprising has external links are an attempt to divert attention from what is really taking place inside the country.

[Constantine] Are the demands confined to the issue of participating in authority in terms of democratic representation, or are there social demands? It is known that Bahrain is a rich country that does not suffer from poverty or from other problems that the other Arab and Islamic countries suffer from.

[Al-Mahfuz] There is no doubt that there are other demands, such as the fair distribution of wealth, social justice, equal opportunities for all people in the country, a radical solution to the issue of unemployment—which is growing all the time, increasing wages, price control, and freedom of press and expression, as well as stopping all practices and manifestations that are contrary to Islam and that contradict the beliefs of the people.

[Constantine] Do you call for applying the Islamic laws as a way out to solve problems in Bahrain?

[Al-Mahfuz] We believe in political pluralism and believe that all opinions and trends of the people should be respected. We support what the people say and decide [words indistinct] or general elections.

[Constantine] What is the number of the currents and forces opposed to the Bahraini regime?

[Al-Mahfuz] There are several clear-cut opposition currents and forces currently operating in Bahrain. They are the following: The Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, and the Islamic Movement of Free Bahrainis [harakat ahrar al bahrain al-islamiyah], which are religious factions. Moreover, there are two other leftist movements;

namely, the Popular Front in Bahrain [al- jabhah al-sha'biyah fi al bahrain], and the Bahraini Liberation Front [jabhat al-tahrir fi al-bahrain].

[Constantine] Have you converged with these two fronts on political issues?

[Al-Mahfuz] We have converged with all opposition movements. Coordination is under way among all parties, God be praised for this.

[Constantine] In your capacity as opposition and as Islamic movements, how willing are you to hold a dialogue with the authority?

[Al-Mahfuz] In the first place, I would like to say that we would prefer and would like to engage in dialogue. However, we are afraid that the authority might seek to circumvent the legitimate and fair demands of our people, who always make their demands when real crises emerge. The authority has made a habit of circumventing the people's demands through unjustified malicious steps, as happened on several historical national occasions, particularly when the people appear to be on the winning side.

[Constantine] The external image of Bahrain is always the image of a prosperous country that has no problems. Have these problems come out of the blue, or have there been complaints that have gone unannounced? If the latter situation is the case, how long has this situation been experienced?

[Al-Mahfuz] The Bahraini authorities always seek to give the impression that the situation in the country is normal, and that there are no problems whatsoever in the country. Nonetheless, those who are following developments in the country are well aware beyond any shadow of doubt that there are real problems in the country. Several international human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, the U.S. Congress's Human Rights Committee, and the European Parliament's Human Rights Committee, have issued several reports condemning the authority's practices and infractions, as well as its extensive human rights abuses.

[Constantine] A last question: Do you believe that a certain regional party; specifically, Saudi Arabia, for example, is supporting the Bahraini regime against change? Or do you absolve Saudi Arabia of any efforts in that direction?

[Al-Mahfuz] As a matter of fact, we believe that what is taking place in Bahrain is a domestic affair. It is our hope that there will be no interference by any party, regional or otherwise, because this would disproportionately aggravate the regional situation. We actually fear the emergence of some unwise positions, which might result in interference in the affairs pertaining to peoples.

[Constantine] Can you provide us an update on the security situation in Bahrain?

[Al-Mahfuz] There is a semblance of martial law there. There is a stringent search of all those entering and leaving the country, either via the airport or the causeway. Moreover, the capital city of Manama is virtually under siege. In some areas, martial law is being enforced. Hundreds of defenseless Bahrainis have continued to experience house searches and stormings as well as arrests.

[Constantine] Thank you, Shaykh al-Mahfuz.

[Al-Mahfuz] May God protect you. You are most welcome.

AFP on Subsiding Violence, Opposition Claims

Situation 'Calm' Amidst Tight Security

NC2312202694 Paris AFP in English 1729 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Dec 23 (AFP)—Police armed with assault rifles and tear-gas stood ready for action outside Shiite Moslem mosques in the Bahraini capital Manama Friday [23 December] but witnesses said the streets were calm after two weeks of clashes.

The Shiite villages of Sanabis, Jidd Hafs, (Daih), Barbar and al-Diraz were also calm, a witness who visited them Friday said.

Other witnesses contacted from Cyprus said sermons delivered at Friday prayers in Sunni Moslem mosques in Manama made no mention of the clashes which claimed the lives of five demonstrators and four policemen, according to the opposition.

The authorities only reported the death of one policeman.

In a statement received by AFP early Friday, the banned Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB) had predicted demonstrations after Friday prayers in Jidd Hafs and Sanabis.

One witness said the streets of al-Diraz were virtually deserted, but still littered with burnt tyres.

In al-Budayyi' further north, the scene of repeated clashes since December 5, armed police patrolled the streets in force, he said.

Violence erupted in Bahrain last week when hundreds of Shiite Moslems held protests to demand the release of Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman, who was arrested after calling for the restoration of parliament, suspended in 1975.

The IFLB said more than 1,600 people were arrested, with Moslem clerics especially targeted.

It was the worst violence in Bahrain since it became independent in 1971.

In Beirut, IFLB leader Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali Mahfuz demanded that the authorities agree to hold elections, saying the uprising was due to "the ruling family's refusal to restore democratic life."

The country's national assembly was dissolved by the ruling amir 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah in 1975.

Life Begins To Return to Normal

NC2412205394 Paris AFP in English 2034 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Dec 24 (AFP)—Security remained tight as life began returning to normal Saturday [24 December] in Bahrain following two weeks of clashes between demonstrators and police, witnesses said.

Residents contacted by telephone from Cyprus said they went to work as normal Saturday and classes resumed in schools where small demonstrations had been held earlier in the week.

However, lorry loads of anti-riot police remained stationed in the main streets of the capital Manama, on the edge of Shiite Moslem areas in the city and in neighbouring villages, witnesses said.

In a statement issued in Tehran, the banned Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB) said six Shiite Moslem demonstrators wounded in clashes with security forces in Bahrain earlier this week had died in hospital, raising the overall death toll in the disturbances to 15.

The group said Tuesday that five demonstrators and four members of the security forces had died in the clashes, which erupted December 12 and peaked last week-end.

The Bahraini authorities only reported the death of one policeman in the violence, which broke out after the arrest of Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman. He had called for the restoration of parliament, suspended since 1975.

In Kuwait 50 young Bahrainis demonstrated in a mosque against the authorities' crackdown Saturday.

At the entrance to the mosque the protesters hung portraits of Hani 'Abbas Khamis, 23, and Hani 'Ahmad al-Wasti, 22, who were shot dead by police a week ago in Sanabis, a Shiite Moslem village near the capital Manama, one participant said.

Opposition Claims 6 Die After Clashes

NC2412135694 Paris AFP in English 1249 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 24 (AFP)—Six Shiite Moslem demonstrators who were wounded in clashes with security forces in Bahrain earlier this week have died in hospital, a Bahraini opposition group said Saturday [24 December].

The banned Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB) said in a statement that the bodies were still at the al-Salmaniyah hospital in the Bahraini capital of Manama.

The group said Tuesday that five demonstrators and four members of the security forces had died in the clashes, which erupted December 12 and peaked last week-end.

The Bahraini authorities only reported the death of one policeman in the violence which erupted after the arrest of Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman after he called for the restoration of parliament, suspended since 1975.

According to newspaper reports here, "angry crowds poured into the streets throughout Bahrain on Friday to commemorate the martyrs of the uprising."

The demonstrators "converged" at Jidd Hafs and Sanabis, where two of the demonstrators who had been killed by security forces were buried.

It was the worst violence in Bahrain since it became independent in 1975.

Opposition Reports Over 2,200 Arrested

NC2512172994 Paris AFP in English 1551 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 25 (AFP)—More than 2,200 people have been arrested in Bahrain, accused of provoking clashes between Shiite Moslems and security forces, a Bahraini opposition group said here Sunday (25 December].

The banned Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain (IFLB) said security forces were arresting people "at random" throughout the Gulf state and had put a tight cordon around areas with large Shiite communities.

Last week the IFLB and diplomats in the Bahraini capital Manama said up to 1,600 people had been arrested in two weeks of violence which erupted after the detention of Shiite cleric Sheikh 'Ali Salman. He had demanded the restoration of parliament, suspended since 1975.

It was the worse violence in Bahrain since the former British protectorate became independent in 1971.

The IFLB also said 4,000 more troops and national guards had left Saudi Arabia for Bahrain on December 22 to help quell the two-week uprising.

The group accused Riyadh last week of "interfering" in the unrest and sending in a unit of national guards.

Witnesses said security remained tight in Bahrain Saturday as life began returning to normal.

Lorry loads of anti-riot police remained stationed in the main streets of the capital Manama, on the edge of Shiite Moslem areas in the city and in neighbouring villages, they said.

The IFLB said six Shiite Moslem demonstrators wounded in clashes with security forces in Bahrain had died in hospital, raising the overall death toll in the disturbances to 15.

The group said Tuesday that five demonstrators and four members of the security forces had died in the clashes which erupted December 12.

The Bahraini authorities only reported the death of one policeman in the violence.

Banned Opposition Groups Call For Dialogue

NC2712142294 Paris AFP in English 1321 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Dec 27 (AFP)—Two banned Bahraini opposition groups on Tuesday [27 December] called on the government to open dialogue with Shiite Muslim protest leaders to end conflict which has left an estimated 15 people dead in the Gulf state.

"The only way out of the crisis consists of opening a dialogue with the Islamic figures over their demands, and to free all people arrested during the riots," the Popular Front and the National Front said in a joint statement received here.

"Resorting to ambiguous methods will not help the problem, because it was ignoring the Bahraini people's political and economic demands that led to the crisis."

Another opposition group, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, said police arrested some 2,200 people during two weeks of violence between Shiite Muslims and security forces which erupted after the detention of Shiite cleric Shaykh 'Ali Salman on December 5.

The shaykh had demanded the restoration of parliament, suspended since 1975.

It was the worst violence in Sunni Muslim-ruled Bahrain since the former British protectorate became independent in 1971.

The clashes left 15 dead, eleven demonstrators and four policemen, according to the opposition, but authorities only reported the death of one person, a policeman.

Lorry-loads of riot police on Tuesday remained posted on the outskirts of the main Shiite Muslim areas in Bahrain to prevent further clashes, said witnesses contacted by telephone from Cyprus.

Bahraini authorities say Shiites make up 35 percent of the population, but independent sources have put the figure at between 55 and 60 percent.

Saddam Speaks on Post-Sanctions 'Strategy'

JN2512211194 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, has said: We have charted a strategic plan for the post-sanctions era with regard to development in general, and to channeling industrial, agricultural, and reconstruction investment in particular. This strategy has been inspired by our enormous experience, sufferings, successes, defiance, and steadfastness, and also by the ability to explore, analyze, and choose the best alternatives.

His excellency the president added: Phenomena under extraordinary circumstances are not addressed by conventional means, but rather by practical and innovative means that involve minimal losses. When the purposes of any extraordinary decision are exhausted, we reexamine it. We might revoke it, amend it, or develop it.

These remarks were made by the leader president, may God protect him, when he presided over the 32d session of the Council of Ministers.

Addressing members of the Council of Ministers, party comrades, and state officials, his excellency the president went on to say: Everybody in this jihad march must acquire a noble trait that should become his hallmark. The acquisition of such a trait is made possible by the stupendous efforts one is supposed to make in the course of this march. This is reminiscent of the special noble traits acquired by the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and the nation's leaders. Consequently, the nation produced al-Siddiq [Abu-Bakr al-Siddiq], al-Faruq ['Umar Bin-al-Khattab], Dhu-al-Nurayn ['Uthman Bin-'Affan], Habib al-Mu'minin [?'Ali Bin-Abi Talib], and Sayf Allah al-Maslul [Khalid Bin-al-Walid], and others, may they all obtain God's satisfaction.

During its 32d session, the Council of Ministers discussed several organizational issues listed on its agenda, including promoting the work mechanism of the State Enterprise for Testing and Certifying Seeds to improve the productivity of agricultural produce, as well as the regulations governing the granting of incentives to Taxation Department employees, and adopted the necessary decisions regarding them.

Saddam Delivers Message on Christmas, New Year

JN2412192394 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 24 Dec 94

["Text" of address by President Saddam Husayn to the Iraqi people and the Arab nation on the occasion of Christmas and the new year—recorded; read by Culture and Information Minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

From Saddam Husayn to the sons of his great people and to the sons of the glorious Arab nation, particularly the Christians, and all honorable and fair people in the world.

The birthday of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, is a glorious occasion on which everybody believing in one God and the divine religions recalls the values of good, love, justice, and peace. The message of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, calls for these noble values and struggles against the opposite behavior of evil, hatred, injustice, and aggression. These values, which Islam has emphasized and which faithful Muslims have taken for an example, are gaining a special importance under these circumstance in which our people have been confronted for several years by a behavior that is completely opposite to the values of Jesus Christ's message—a behavior being exercised by unjust, tyrannical governments, which claim falsely that they are affiliated with that message and which are wrongly followed by some regimes and states in the region.

Through their aggressive policies and by imposing an unjust blockade, the U.S. Government and other influential circles in the West have gone too far in their grudge against Iraq's people and even against their values. They also do not hesitate to insist on killing Iraq's children and elderly and creating difficulties and pain for millions of Iraqis.

Those opposing the values of the nobility and virtue of the divine religions, those who violate the simplest human rights, and those who insist on their evils and crimes do not differ in their behavior and inhuman policies from those who antagonized and persecuted Jesus Christ, together with his followers and his early disciples. Let their actions be accursed.

O great people everywhere, who believe in monotheistic religions and their great teachings:

Iraq, which takes pride in the fact that it is the cradle of the messages; which is known for its belief in the values and principles of virtue, right, justice, and good; and which is determined to continue its leading march and to apply these values honestly, will not bow to the evildoers and to the vileness and injustice of the arrogant and will not abandon its values and principles.

Iraq shall continue its hard struggle and blessed jihad for freedom and independence, construction and progress, raising high the banner of God is Great.

Our people have suffered a great deal from the injustice and spite of wrongdoers and vindictive people. But, with God's help, by virtue of the great principles in which Iraq believes, and thanks to the steadfastness of this great people, their awareness, and high sense of patriotism, they have managed, under these hard circumstances, to reconstruct all that was damaged by the villains. The Iraqi people have also managed to pursue construction, progress, creativity, and production. Therefore, we have great and high confidence that this unfair blockade, imposed by the tyrants, especially the U.S. Administration, against our unyielding people, will be broken and that injustice will be lifted. This will happen after the wrongdoers fail, thanks to the steadfastness and strength of the Iraqi people and their adherence to their principles and values, with the help of the honest and noble people in the world—states, institutions, and individuals—who have learned the facts about the injustice done to Iraq and the crimes committed against its people.

Brothers: I wish you a happy Christmas and a new year full of pride and happiness and blessings. God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn

[Dated] 21 Rajab 1415 hegira, corresponding to 24 December 1994

Saddam Receives Old 'Comrades' From Egypt

JN2512180094 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, has received several female and male comrades who were honored to have been his colleagues during his struggle in Egypt in the early sixties.

Palestinian Delegation Meets With Officials

NPPF Head Receives Group

JN2612122294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1010 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 26 Dec (INA)-'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, secretary general of the National Progressive and Patriotic Front, has received Abu-'Ali Mustafa [Mustafa al-Zibri], deputy secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], and his delegation.

The PFLP delegation expressed the Palestinian people's pride in the pan-Arab positions of President Saddam Husayn and the results of the historic immortal Mother of Battles in face of the colonialist-imperialist aggression, whether its military chapter, or the chapter of the unjust siege. The delegation emphasized that this steadfastness gives a boost to the Palestinian Arab people's struggle for their legitimate rights.

'Aziz Receives Mustafa al-Zibri, Malluh

JN2612204794 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1958 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 26 Dec (INA)—Tariq 'Aziz, Revolution Command Council [RCC] member and official in charge of the RCC's Arab Liberation Movements Bureau, today received Abu-'Ali Mustafa [Mustafa al-Zibri], assistant secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], and 'Abd-al-Rahim Malluh, member of the PFLP Political Bureau.

During the meeting, the talks dealt with the current Arab situation, particularly in the Palestinian arena. The two sides stressed the need for solidarity among the nationalist and pan-Arab forces to confront the challenges and threats to the Arab nation.

Abu-'Ali Mustafa praised the steadfastness and firmness of the Iraqi people and their leadership in the face of challenges, and the reconstruction campaign and persistent struggle to lift the unjust blockade.

Attending the meeting were the director of the RCC Arab Liberation Movements Bureau and the PFLP representative in Baghdad.

Paper Views 'Heroic' Jerusalem Suicide Operation

JN2612120294 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0855 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 26 Dec (INA)—AL-THAWRAH newspaper has said the Arab-Zionist conflict has not been, and will never be a conflict over land or borders as the settlement approach tries to propagate.

In an article published today, the newspaper, which speaks on behalf of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says the Arab-Zionist conflict is a conflict of history and civilization that cannot be ended with the signing of formal agreements or by the settlement project led by the U.S. godfather, which imposes by force what suits Tel Aviv to ensure the Zionists' continued influence and domination of the region.

The newspaper was commenting on the heroic operation carried out by a young Palestinian suicide attacker in Jerusalem yesterday which injured 12 Zionist settlers and martyred the Palestinian commando.

AL-THAWRAH says that the Zionist project, which targets the Palestinian identity and entrenches the concept of coexistence and imposition of the Zionist presence in the region, is facing obstacles that will never be eliminated despite the U.S. and Western sponsorship and use of agent Arab and other rulers.

It says the objective reply to all attempts aimed at ending the conflict or changing its roots or nature is through escalating commando operations to demonstrate rejection of the settlement that will never return Arab rights in Palestine.

The newspaper concludes that the commando operation carried out by a young Palestinian in occupied Jerusalem yesterday comes within the series of defiant steps against the Zionist project. This defiance will not stop as long as the occupation of Palestine continues to liquidate the Palestinian Arab people, erase the Palestinian identity, and forge the Zionist dream of "O Israel, the Nile to the Euphrates is your land."

Rabin Returns From Oman, Notes Visit's Impact

TA2712061594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has returned home from a secret visit to the Gulf State of Oman. The premier was out of Israel for about 16 hours. He held talks in Muscat with Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id and returned to Israel during the early hours of this morning.

Israel says the meeting was kept secret at the request of the Omani leader. At this point, there is no announcement on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. David Ze'ev reports:

[Begin recording] [Ze'ev] The seat of Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was conspicuously empty at the center of the government table in the Knesset plenum yesterday afternoon, as the house voted on motions of no confidence. Last night, several hours later, the reason for his unusual absence was announced publicly: an historic secret visit by an Israeli prime minister to Oman. During the early hours of this morning, Prime Minister Rabin convened a news conference at Ben-Gurion Airport:

[Rabin] I am really pleased to receive the invitation of His Majesty, the sultan of Oman, Sultan Qabus, to come for a short visit to Muscat, the capital of Oman. The purpose was to strengthen, to give backing for the continuation of the peace process, based on the Madrid peace conference.

[Ze'ev] Israel expects to establish diplomatic relations with Oman soon, but Prime Minister Rabin had no such announcement to make at this point.

[Rabin] As you know, we opened interests representation in Rabat, Morocco. We are in the process of doing it with Tunisia, and I believe that the courage of His Majesty, the sultan, and the imagination that by inviting the prime minister of Israel to visit—the first visit of an Israeli prime minister in any one of the countries of the Arabian Peninsula—to do so, I believe that we should be thankful to him [sentence as heard]. He did it, and he stressed that he does it in encouragement of the continuation of the peace process.

[Ze'ev] Israel believes, following these contacts, that diplomatic ties with Oman and others will come with further progress in the peace process. In the meantime, the leaders of Oman and Israel discussed areas of bilateral cooperation. Israel hopes that the continuing positive approach by the Gulf states to the peace process will further convince Syria to move ahead in the peace negotiations. [end recording]

Rabin, King Husayn Discuss Oman Visit

TA2712120494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rabin this morning spoke with King Husayn on the telephone. The conversation was long and dealt with the prime minister's visit to Oman, among other issues.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports, meanwhile, that Foreign Ministry representatives have been having difficulty finding a house for the Israeli Embassy in Amman. Ministry staffers have inspected several buildings in the Jordanian capital, but owners of the buildings objected to hosting the embassy on the premises.

UN Ambassador Comments on Syria Talks

TA2612123094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Gad Ya'aqobi, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, says that the possibility of stationing military forces and observers on the Golan Heights within the framework of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria was discussed at closed-door meetings between Security Council members and in the course of conversations in the corridors of the UN building.

The ambassador added that the issue was raised as a hypothetical possibility and any detailed discussion of the matter would be premature.

Ya'aqobi also said that there were no contacts, ties, or meetings between the Iraqi and Israeli UN representatives. Ambassador Ya'aqobi noted that although Iraq had sent messages to the effect that it was not Israel's enemy and supported the agreement with the PLO, in his view all Baghdad was seeking was to ease the international sanctions on it.

Ambassador Ya'aqobi is now in Israel for consultations and was speaking to our political correspondent Shlomo Raz.

Knesset Restricts PA Activity in Jerusalem

TA2612164494 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 26 Dec 94

[Report by Oren Kohen]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] About an hour ago, a Knesset majority of 56 versus six passed the bill restricting the Palestinian Authority's [PA] political activities in the Orient House building and in other locations in East Jerusalem. This third and last vote on the bill was preceded by a no-confidence vote, submitted by HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] and the Arab Democratic Party, which are opposed to imposing restrictions on the PA's activities in the areas under Israel's control.

Likud Knesset Member [MK] Binyamin Netanyahu, Tzomet MK Moshe Peled, and National Religious Party MK Hanan Porat took the podium to explain why their factions chose to abstain and not to vote against the government's bill, despite their opposition in principle to the Oslo and Cairo agreements. MK Netanyahu promised the prime minister that the Likud will fully cooperate with the government in the political struggle against the PA, saying: There is no dispute over the issue of Jerusalem. We will all back you up.

[Begin Netanyahu recording] As a matter of fact, you ran out of excuses three minutes ago. You now have the bill you asked for in order to take steps for the sake of a unified

Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. Indeed, this is the final hour, because we are losing Jerusalem. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Peres Says Redeployment Talks To Be Held 'Discreetly'

TA2612115594 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Dec 94 p A3

[Report by Knesset correspondent Gid'on Alon]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has said that negotiations for finalizing the details of the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment outside the main West Bank cities will be conducted discreetly in order to prevent leaks that could foil the understandings reached between the two sides on this issue. Speaking at yesterday's cabinet session, the foreign minister said that the Palestinians now understand Israel's security needs.

During the cabinet session it was also stated that the Palestinian Authority has asked Israel to hold a top level meeting this week between Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman 'Arafat, or within the framework of the liaison committee between Foreign Minister Peres and Nabil Sha'th.

According to Peres, "we do not know whether the election issue is a pivotal issue for them, or whether for them it is a way to reach IDF redeployment." Peres said he found 'Arafat "encouraged," adding that the economic situation in the Gaza Strip is not getting worse. According to Peres, 'Arafat is less concerned about the economic situation than in the past.

West Bank Settlement Expansion Said To Continue

TA2512061594 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Israel will not stop the planned expansion of West Bank settlements, including that of Efrat near Bethlehem. This was stated by the coordinator of activities in the territories, Major General Dani Rothschild, in a meeting in Bethlehem last night with Palestinian negotiator Nabil Sha'th.

Some 30,000 pilgrims attended Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem, marred only by the illness of Mayor Ilyas Frayj. Steve Linde reports:

[Begin recording] [Linde] Construction will resume today on the new neighborhood of Efrat, called Giv'at Tamar, despite protests from nearby Palestinian residents. But the dispute did not dampen the Christmas spirit in a meeting last night between Dani Rothschild and Nabil Sha'th at the Bethlehem municipality.

Rothschild said talks on the second stage of self-rule will continue this week, but so will the expansion of Efrat, and he rejected any notion of a deadlock in the negotiations.

[Rothschild] There is no deadlock. We are talking; there are meetings going on, last week, next week, and eventually we will come out with progress. It is not easy, but I am quite optimistic that we will work it out. The time schedule of the negotiations will be decided upon in the next few days. As far as the construction which goes on near Bethlehem, I said before: It is a construction which was planned a long time before the DOP [Declaration of Principles] was signed. It is not new. The new are the construction time schedule which brought them to start it now, but it is not new. [sentence as heard]

[Linde] Sir, when can we expect Israeli troops out of Bethlehem?

[Rothschild] Might take much faster than next Christmas, but that is part of the negotiations. [sentence as heard] If you want me to say a date, I am not in a position. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Netanyahu: 'Arafat To Move Headquarters in W. Bank

TA2512102894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Knesset Member [MK] Binyamin Netanyahu says Yasir 'Arafat plans to relocate his headquarters in the village of Abu-Dis near Jerusalem after the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] pulls out of Bethlehem. According to Netanyahu, 'Arafat thereby intends to bolster Palestinian control in the area from Bethlehem to East Jerusalem.

MK Netanyahu told our correspondent Gil Litman he knows that the government has agreed to 'Arafat's plan. Netanyahu spoke during a tour by opposition faction leaders of the Bethlehem area.

Sarid Denies Netanyahu Remarks

TA2612135994 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 26 Dec 94 p 3

[Report by Yehuda Tzur]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] In response to Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu's remarks that Yasir 'Arafat has been assured that he will be able to set up a headquarters in the village of Abu-Dis near Jerusalem, Environment Minister Yosi Sarid said yesterday that this is "total nonsense." Sarid said that no such plan has been presented and that the whole thing is absurd. The minister claimed that Netanyahu's remarks are totally unfounded. [passage omitted]

Netanyahu: PLO 'Mafia' Controlling East Jerusalem

TA2612122294 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Knesset Member [MK] Binyamin Netanyahu says that elements within the Israeli police are interested in taking more aggressive steps against PLO activity in East Jerusalem; however, officials at the Prime Minister's Office are preventing them from doing so. Netanyahu told our correspondent Qobi Meydan today that he has learned that members of the Palestinian security services inside the autonomous areas were exerting pressure on East Jerusalem businessmen and forcing them to contribute money to the Palestinian Authority [PA].

[Begin recording] [Netanyahu] The PLO's executive arm for quietly seizing control of the city is Jibril al-Rujub, or what is referred to as the Palestinian Security Service, which is really the PLO's mafia. If, for example, a certain Palestinian merchant shows some reluctance to cooperate, he is taken to the security service headquarters in Jericho and slapped around—if one may use that expression—until he quickly changes his mind and signs, contributes, or delivers whatever is asked of him.

[Meydan] Are you talking about an organized protection racket with overt threats being made inside the autonomous areas?

[Netanyahu] That is correct. What must also be realized is that we are rapidly losing control over East Jerusalem. There is no Israeli law or police in the eastern part of the city and whatever remnants remain are disappearing daily. There is an ongoing argument with regard to this issue. I have to give the Israel Police credit for trying to prevent this usurpation. But certain elements, including officials at the Prime Minister's Office, have placed their trust in Jibril al-Rujub. The absurd assertion that he will quell Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] is for all intents and purposes permitting the PLO to seize control of East Jerusalem and effect its redivision.

[Meydan] And you are saying that senior police officials want to take tough steps and the prime minister is stopping them?

[Netanyahu] Right. That is the case in East Jerusalem. [end recording]

Peres Denies Plan To Hand Jerusalem Villages to PLO

TA2512184694 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has denied Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu's remarks that the government plans to hand over control of several villages east of Jerusalem to the PLO.

Netanyahu Said 'Pressuring' White House for Meeting

TA2512103494 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 25 Dec 94 p A4

[Report by 'Aqiva Eldar in Washington and Yerah Tal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu has recently been pressuring the White House for a meeting with President Bill Clinton, claiming that he "represents at least half of Israel's citizens." This was reported yesterday by a senior source in Washington.

According to the source, senior Likud members have made it clear to the U.S. Administration that a Likud-led government would be willing to make compromises on the Golan Heights within the framework of a peace agreement with Syria. According to the same source, a senior Likud member explained that just as there are Labor leaders who oppose a withdrawal on the Golan, some Likud leaders are in favor of making concessions to Syria. [passage omitted]

HA'ARETZ has obtained a letter by Netanyahu, written on stationary bearing the insignia of a New York organization called "The Friends of Likud." The letter gives details of a public opinion poll conducted by Bar Ilan University's Center for Strategic Studies, according to which some 70 percent of Israel's citizens oppose the stationing U.S. troops on the Golan. The letter cites Reserve Major Generals Yosi Peled and Tzvi Zamir as opposing concessions on the Golan.

Under a headline that reads "A Knowledgeable Jerusalemite," the document says that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad has recently appointed the persons who planned the attack on the El Al plane in London in 1986 to senior positions, and that the Syrian Army top brass are collecting millions of dollars by funneling drugs to the West.

Yerah Tal adds: The Likud spokesman reported that the possibility of Likud Chairman Netanyahu meeting U.S. President Clinton was discussed before the President's visit to Israel. No date has been set for the meeting yet, and no pressure is being applied. The spokesman said that the report saying that senior Likud members are willing to make concessions on the Golan is "a lie." He denied Netanyahu ever saying that he would not express his position concerning the Golan while in the United States.

'Giv'at Tamar' Said State Land; Arabs Told To Evacuate

TA2612171994 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The area the Jewish settlers call Giv'at Tamar, north of the settlement of Efrat, has been classified state land. The Civil Administration issued an order calling on the residents of the village of al-Khidr to evacuate the site.

Efrat residents plan to drive tractors up the disputed hill tomorrow and continue the infrastructure work for the new neighborhood. Our settlement affairs correspondent Gil Litman reports:

[Litman] The disputed land between Efrat and al-Khidr is state land allotted to the settlement, the Civil Administration has officially announced. The announcement is intended to settle the dispute. On the ground, however, the two sides are preparing for tomorrow. The settlers will drive tractors up the hill to continue the infrastructure work, while al-Khidr residents promise to stop the tractors with their bodies and even bring heavy equipment to start work to expand their village. Arab villagers are maintaining a constant lookout on the hilltop to get early warning of the settlers' actions. Several villagers are spending the night on the disputed land.

What will happen to the olive saplings planted yesterday by al-Khidr villagers and Israeli leftists? Efrat residents threatened to uproot the saplings, but the council head, fearing a violent incident, appealed to the army to do it. A senior army officer in the region confirmed to us that soldiers will uproot them. Thus, all those involved in the affair—the settlers, the Palestinians, and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces]—will turn up on the disputed hill tomorrow morning for what may be the last round in this struggle.

Arabs Removed From Efrat Hill; Sarid on New Settlement

TA2712090894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The controversial hill between the village of al-Khidr and Efrat has been cleared of local Arab residents and left-wing activists, who were protesting the construction of a Jewish neighborhood on the site. Dozens of police, Border Police, and army soldiers had to use force to evacuate and detain dozens of protesters. One demonstrator fainted.

Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that Civil Administration workers uprooted the olive saplings planted on the site two days ago, and are now clearing the way for bulldozers due to start working soon.

Our correspondent was told by settlers that as they were driving by al-Khidr, they came under a barrage of stones. In response, they fired warning shots in the air.

Minister Yosi Sarid has said that the construction of the new Efrat neighborhood should be prevented. He maintained that Israel cannot negotiate with the Palestinians on the one hand and seize their land to build settlements on the other. The status quo should be maintained until the status of the area is established, Yosi Sarid said.

Rabin on Tactics in Lebanon, Syrian Role

TA2312192694 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 23 Dec 94

[Moti 'Eden video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin arrived at the northern border this evening to be updated on what is happening there. The methods of operation should be changed from time to time, he said in an interview to Moti 'Eden:

[Begin recording] [Rabin] We have to remember that we have already tried to uproot terrorism in Lebanon through a comprehensive war. We uprooted Palestinian terrorism, but it was replaced by much worse, much tougher terrorism, which is basically Lebanese and not foreign. That reality is not easy to live with. We have to cope with it, from time to time adapt our modus operandi, and perhaps search for better ways to defend our outposts, which is not easy.

['Eden] Mr. Rabin, I understand no more dramatic action against Hizballah activity is planned, that you are not considering anything like that.

[Rabin] I will not say what is being planned and what is not. I say that in principle our policy is being implemented while being adapted to changing circumstances, including aggressive activity. It must remain within the overall framework of our policy, which is not interested in extending our activity to everywhere in Lebanon, but does not rule out suitable targets for action, as we did in ('Ayn al-Dhar) in the al-Biqa'. At the same time, however, our policy is to assure the security zone, our outposts and those of the SLA [South Lebanese Army], as far as is possible.

['Eden] We used to say the Syrians are to blame. I understand that defense elements now say that the Syrians should not be blamed, that we should find the fault with the attackers.

[Rabin] We have to differentiate. The Syrians have a declared policy that the Lebanese are permitted to fight against those who are located on their soil, meaning us. Supplies to Hizballah arrive from Iran through Damascus. The commands and the training bases are situated in the al-Biqa', in areas controlled by Syria. The Syrians have a supportive policy which permits the flow of people and arms from Iran to Lebanon and people from Lebanon to Iran, which they do not prevent. They intervened once following Operation Accountability and imposed the understandings—which are not the best arrangement to assure peace and quiet, but they at least restrict to a large degree the danger of katyusha attacks on Jewish settlements. [end recording]

Lubrani on Hizballah, Syrian Ability To Intervene

TA2412143094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 24 Dec 94

[Interview with Uri Lubrani, coordinator of activities in Lebanon, by Miryam Herschlag; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Lubrani] There is a distinct increase in hostile terrorist activity from the north. This has been going on for a number of weeks now. It is, I think, a concerted effort on the part of Hizballah and the other terrorist groups, particularly Palestinians, to try to pressure our present deployment. But this is not the first time that we are subjected to these kind of pressures, and we are trying to deal with it as effectively as is possible.

[Herschlag] Has anything changed in the military capacity of these groups? Do they have more supplies, more missiles?

[Lubrani] Well, I think they have raised the level of their weaponry somewhat. They have got more effective weapons to use now. Nothing dramatic, but nevertheless, it has its effect. But this is something what we know is happening. I mean, they are being supplied by Iran, and the Iranis from time to time raise the level of the weaponry they supply.

[Herschlag] Is the international community doing enough to curtail Iranian flow of weapons to these groups?

[Lubrani] My response to that is an emphatic no. But of course, this is something which is for the international community to do. We, on our part, are trying to do our best to fend under these circumstances.

[Herschlag] In the summer of 1993, after a miniwar in Lebanon which Israel named Operation Accountability, the sides reached some agreements that limited Israel's capacity to hit back—for example, Hizballah targets in civilians centers. Does Israel remain bound by those understandings?

[Lubrani] Yes, we are trying to keep to our parts of the deal. It is not always easy. The other part encroaches on these understandings of late, more often than before, and this is, of course, testing our patience. But we are trying to do that because we are trying to keep from escalating.

[Herschlag] Does that mean that if the Hizballah fires from civilian areas, Israel will not hit back at those targets?

[Lubrani] I am not predicting anything. I am just saying that our patience is being tested, and we are doing our very best to try and keep to our part of the bargain.

[Herschlag] In the past, Israel has said that Syria pulls the strings in Lebanon or, at least, that Damascus could stop the acts of aggression against Israel if it wanted to. Is there any explanation for the fact that things are heating up in Lebanon the same week that there appears to be a diplomatic breakthrough in talks with Syria?

[Lubrani] We have always thought that we will let the tracks do their work and we will continue to do whatever we have to do to keep security as much on even keel as possible. That is what we are continuing to try doing, but definitely Syria has the capability to stop this business. It is not doing so because, from Syria's point of view, this might be something which enhances power leverages both, they believe, in the negotiating track and outside it.

[Herschlag] But is not Israel giving Syria a message that it is a useful way to work, a useful way to operate, by going ahead with the peace talks? Should Israel not say: Fine, you are ready to talk, but we are not going to talk until the bombing stops near our northern border?

[Lubrani] Look, we are doing it as we go along, and you know, Operation Accountability did not just materialize out of the blue; it materialized as a result of a culmination of many good reasons to do it. We hope that such a need will not arise, but we feel absolutely free to do whatever has to be done to keep peace and tranquillity along both sides of the border. This is our policy, and we will continue to do so.

[Herschlag] Hizballah says that it escalated its attacks because of the car bomb this week in Beirut that killed four people, including a top Hizballah official. Did Israel plant the car bomb?

[Lubrani] We are being accused of every car bomb, every unrest, every bad deed in Lebanon. We are used to this, and we are not surprised that we are the target of accusations. Many people and many organizations have good reason to act in Lebanon, both Lebanese and others, and I think this is just a trumped up business.

[Herschlag] So, Israel did not plant the car bomb?

[Lubrani] No.

Beilin Claims Syria Could Control Hizballah

TA2612062794 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin also says Syria could control Hizballah activity in South Lebanon. He was speaking to reporter Sylvia Leif.

[Begin Beilin recording] We understand that Lebanon is not totally independent. There is very close contact between Lebanon and Syria, and we believe that once we make peace with Syria the Syrians will be able to control the militias in Lebanon, including Hizballah. Just not so long ago it was a Hizballah leader who said that once there is peace between Israel and Syria, the Hizballah will not continue its activities. That is something that we know. It does not mean that Syria is encouraging necessarily, or asking, the Hizballah to increase violence, but we know that if Syria wants to put an end to the activity it is able to do that. [end recording]

Cabinet Briefed on Lebanon, Jerusalem Attack

TA2512163494 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Report by Udi Segal]

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq briefed the cabinet on the situation in Lebanon today in uniform for the last time. Syria can prevent Hizballah activity, Baraq said. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin added that Hizballah has reached the conclusion that it has no chance of beating Israel in an outright war; therefore, it is waging a war of attrition.

Minister Ora Namir claimed that there is no government policy on Lebanon. It is enough to look at Major General 'Amiram Levin, commander of the Northern Command, and the soldiers in the field to understand that they are dealing with fixed targets and do not have an overall policy.

Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer proposed withdrawing military outposts, which are easy targets, and increasing mobile activity while carrying out a massive offensive against all south Lebanese fronts.

[Begin Ben-Eli'ezer recording] Except for peace, I do not think anything can basically solve the problem, but until peace comes, I am unequivocally in favor of doing other things, without going into details. Just as we are experiencing an uncomfortable period at present, we can make them feel uncomfortable, too. [end recording]

Prime Minister Rabin said removing outposts from the security zone would permit Hizballah to seize control of the area.

Minister Shim'on Shetrit said resolve and steadfastness, as well as serious activity, are required. Rabin: So what do you suggest? To recapture Beirut?

As usual, the cabinet deliberations concluded without any decisions being made. The ministers received only a general report on the Israeli-Syrian military officers talks in Washington. Rabin did not name the officers, some of whom were sitting around the cabinet table. The prime minister stressed that they dealt only with security arrangements and not political issues. Minister Yosi Sarid said:

[Begin Sarid recording] We cannot talk of a breakthrough, but we can definitely say they made progress. [end recording]

Rabin used the opportunity to take leave of the chief of staff, whom he praised, and concluded: To work with you was pure pleasure, Ehud.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 25 December carries a related report by political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen , adding that "in their weekly meeting today, the cabinet ministers heard a report on this morning's terrorist attack in Jerusalem. Security elements said it is quite impossible to prevent such attacks." Asked by Rosen about the report that the terrorist had belonged to the Palestinian police, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, in a recorded passage, says: "If there are 10,000 policemen, such a mishap can happen. If I am not mistaken, both 'Arafat and Nabil Sha'th strongly condemned this. I understand that the man had retired from the Palestinian police and joined Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. It is difficult to lay down rules with regard to a suicide terrorist; each case is different and requires individual treatment."]

Rabin Names Shahal to Peace Team

TA2512115894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has decided to appoint YI'UD [Independent and Democratic Israel] Knesset Member Gonen Segev energy and infrastructure minister. Police Minister Moshe Shahal, who also holds the energy portfolio, will be granted a new post—the Ministry of Information.

The appointments must first be brought before the cabinet and the Knesset to become official. David Ze'ev reports:

[Ze'ev] The Prime Minister's Office confirmed that Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin had decided to make Knesset Member Gonen Segev energy and infrastructure minister, and that Police Minister Moshe Shahal, who held the energy post, will be given as compensation a new Ministry of Information.

An aide to Minister Shahal says another part of the agreement is to make the police and information minister a member of the Israeli ministerial team in the peace talks, to join the prime minister, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, and Minister Yosi Sarid in internal consultations and in such meetings as those with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat.

The aide said the new Ministry of Information will be a full-fledged ministry that will bring together existing bodies: the Government Press Office, which has been under the Prime Minister's Office; the Education Ministry's Information Center; and the Government Publication Office, which had been under the auspices of the Finance Ministry.

As for Gonen Segev himself, he says he met this morning with Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir over allegations of financial impropriety. Segev says Ben-Ya'ir summoned him to his office, telling him to bring his financial records concerning his employment at the Hamat Gader farm and tourism site. But, the soon-to-be minister says he was told at the end of the meeting there is no basis for pressing charges.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1105 GMT on 25 December adds: "Meretz announced that it opposes the appointment of Minister Shahal as minister of coordination, information, and science."]

Baraq Says IDF Waging War Beyond Security Zone

TA2612161794 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 26 Dec 94

[Report by Qobi Mandel]

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief of Staff Ehud Baraq bade farewell to the residents and leaders of the northern settlements this afternoon, during these days of tension along the northern border. Lieutenant General Baraq said the battle against Hizballah is difficult and is being waged under complex circumstances, but it is not restricted only to the security zone.

[Begin Baraq recording] A security zone exists, and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the SLA [South Lebanese Army] fight in it. The war is being waged along the border fence, inside the security zone, along its northern edge, beyond it, and very far beyond it. The public knows of some of the activities, while others remain secret. Hizballah is suffering painful blows, only we do not hear them yelp. They yelp to themselves.

We must prepare for the possibility that it will be a lengthy struggle. The IDF's mission is to ensure that it is not fought here in Shelomi, Zar'it, or the northern neighborhoods of Nahariyya, but along the northern border of the security zone and beyond. [end recording]

The chief of staff rejected the idea of expanding the security zone in the wake of recent events:

[Begin Baraq recording] Suppose we were to expand beyond the range of a katyusha. We would be taking in some 400,000-500,000 Lebanese. In the long run, this would result in more and not fewer casualties. Some two years ago, Hizballah automatically fired katyushas at the northern settlements, not only when we hit villages—accidentally or not—but also when the army attacked Hizballah. Operation Accountability, in which dozens of terrorists were killed and 150,000 Lebanese citizens migrated toward Beirut, made it clear to Hizballah, to the Lebanese, and, indirectly, to the Syrians that the State of

Israel, the IDF, the Israeli Government is willing to take far-reaching steps when the northern settlements hurt. [end recording]

'Terrorists' Said Using Blowtorches, Tunnels From Gaza

TA2612062894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] Qol Yisra'el's reporter adds that terrorists in the Gaza Strip are using powerful blowtorches to burn holes in the fence between Gaza and Israel to enter Israel and carry out attacks. In addition, tunnels have been found below the fence separating the Strip from communities in the south of Israel. Many of the holes have since been sealed.

IDF Spokesman Denies Blowtorch Report

TA2612113494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman has categorically denied that terrorists from the Gaza Strip have been using powerful blowtorches to cut holes in the fence and infiltrate the Green Line in order to perpetrate terrorist attacks.

The denial refers to a report broadcast by Qol Yisra'el this morning.

Police sources told our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky that at least one attack had been carried out after terrorists entered Israel using this method. The sources said that despite its deep foundations, several tunnels had recently been discovered under the fence separating Israeli townships and the Gaza Strip.

'Terrorist' Given 20 Years for Attempted Murder

TA2512130894 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Tel Aviv District Court imposed a 20-year jail term on Sa'id Hattab, the terrorist who was convicted of trying to murder a soldier at the Geha junction three months ago. Hattab and a second terrorist stabbed the soldier in the back, inflicting moderate injuries.

'Terrorist' Fails in Bid To Blow Up Bus, Kills Self

Hamas Claims Responsibility

TA2512101994 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The terrorist who blew himself up in the Jerusalem attack this morning is Iman Ghadi, a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] member from Khan Yunus. This was stated in a leaflet distributed by Hamas in Gaza. The organization took responsibility and threatened to continue the attacks.

Our correspondent Dani Zaqen reports that this morning several media stations, including Qol Yisra'el, received phone calls which said that Hamas was responsible for the bombing.

Twelve persons were wounded in the attack, one of them seriously, another moderately, and the other lightly. Several of the wounded have already been sent home.

Further on Attack, Hamas Statement

NC2512123494 Paris AFP in English 1146 GMT 25 Dec 94

[By Charly Wegman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, Dec 25 (AFP)—A Hamas militant killed himself and wounded 12 other people here on Christmas day when he tried to blow up a bus packed with Israeli servicemen.

Ayman Kamil Radi of the Gaza Strip set off 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of TNT next to a bus full of air force personnel which he was unable to board, the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas said in a statement to AFP.

PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat's self-rule authority on the Gaza Strip immediately condemned the attack which Israeli police said killed the bomber and wounded 12 other people.

A 43-year-old Palestinian man from the West Bank was "gravely" hurt, but the rest, mostly Israelis but also an American woman, were less seriously wounded, police said.

"The toll proves we were very lucky," Israeli police chief Assaf Hefetz said, pointing out that the explosion occurred near a bus station during early morning rush hour.

A policeman on the scene told Israeli radio that "miraculously, the body of the Palestinian cushioned the blast and prevented more casualties."

A soldier, Avi Hasson, said the "body of the terrorist who was about 25 years old was cut in two by the explosion. We first wanted to help him believing he was one of ours."

Elie Carmeli, the driver of the Egged bus, said his passengers narrowly escaped death.

"I fortunately shut the rear door of my vehicle after taking 40 soldiers on board and I had just started when the explosion took place," he said.

"Less than a minute earlier, the terrorist would have been aboard and would have created carnage," he said.

The armed wing of Hamas, 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, said its militant Ayman Radi from Khan Yunus in the Gaza Strip "launched an attack against a bus transporting members of the Israeli air force."

The attack was aimed at "proving Jerusalem will remain the capital of Palestine despite the Zionists' settlement programmes."

But a "technical problem prevented Ayman Radi, who was carrying 10 kilograms (22 pounds) of TNT, from taking his seat on the bus, which caused him to set off the explosive next to the vehicle."

The statement added that Hamas would step up its attacks against Israeli targets and said Sunday's bombing was "dedicated" to the four killed in a car bombing that struck a Hizballah stronghold in Beirut last Wednesday.

The Shiite Moslem Hizballah blamed the attack on Israel.

Hamas has claimed responsibility for the most deadly attacks in Israel this year, including the October 19 suicide bombing against a bus in Tel Aviv that killed 23 people.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid who visited the scene charged that "terrorist organizations opposed to the (Middle East) peace process are trying to step up their actions precisely because the process is moving forward."

"It is difficult to foresee an individual attack but Israeli intelligence services have been at least partially successful in the task."

Police reinforcements rushed to the devastated station while sappers searched the area for more explosives.

In Gaza City, Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani told AFP "We strongly condemn this criminal attack which took place on this holy day of Christmas."

'East Jerusalem Elements' Said Involved

TA2512194294 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ayman Radi, the suicide terrorist who blew himself up near the Jerusalem International Convention Center today, spent a few days in Jerusalem prior to the attack and was aided by East Jerusalem elements. The condition of one of the wounded in the attack is critical; another suffered medium injuries; and 11 were slightly wounded. The terrorist was a Palestinian policeman who defected.

Olmert Terms Attack 'Extremely Grave'

TA2512055694 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert by Karmit Gay; place not given—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Gay] Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, we would like your initial reaction to the attack this morning.

[Olmert] I think this attack is extremely grave. I am glad that, from what we know at this point, the attack resulted in fewer casualties than planned or than there could have been. I hope that all the wounded will be discharged from the hospital soon. Of course, the incident raises questions regarding the measures we can and should implement in order to prevent such attacks in the future.

[Gay] Is it possible to separate the two sides of the city, East Jerusalem from West Jerusalem?

[Olmert] I am not talking about this. I do not recommend that such a dividing line be created within the city, and it is not necessarily certain that such a line could help us fight terrorism. We have seen such a dividing line in the Gaza Strip, but this solution does not necessarily curb terrorism. This is not the way to proceed. [passage omitted]

Police Minister Reacts to Bombing

TA2512062294 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Interview with Police Minister Moshe Shahal by Ron Nesi'el in Jerusalem; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Nesi'el] Mr. Shahal, do you think new measures are called for to deal with lone suicide terrorists?

[Shahal] I think our present deployment is appropriate and sufficient. We must not forget that Jerusalem is a mixed city where 150,000 Arabs live. There are no borders in this city and nobody intends to divide it up or impose restrictions in it. Our activity must continue both in terms of preventive action and in intelligence operations, and this is being done. Nobody can provide 100 percent security.

I think we have to regard this attack against the background of the current events in Algeria. A similar action is being carried out by the same elements: extremist, insane Muslims who murder people indiscriminately. I think the Palestinians, the international community, and the Arabs must denounce this attack. All parties suffer from such attacks. I think Israel should relay the message that without an all out war waged by the entire international community, the problems of terrorism will harm everybody everywhere. I think it is high time an effective war is waged against fundamentalist Islamic terrorism.

Netanyahu: Attack Result of Government Policy

TA2512174094 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] From Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu came this reaction to this morning's Jerusalem attack:

[Begin Netanyahu recording] This attack is the manifestation of the government's policy, but it will become a lot more frequent and a lot deadlier if we follow through on the government's plan to vacate the army from Bethlehem, a southern suburb of Jerusalem, thereby making an immune base for more such terror and for fundamentalist Islam. It is a grave, grave mistake, which must be stopped. [end recording]

Chechens Stage Sit-in at Russian Embassy

JN2412112094 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 24 Dec 94 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—AL-RA'Y—The Chechen community in Jordan staged a peaceful sit-in in front of the Russian Embassy in Amman yesterday, Friday [23 December], to protest the Russian military intervention in the Republic of Chechnya and the missile bombardment of its capital, Groznyy, which killed or wounded many civilians in the Chechen area.

The participants in the sit-in chanted slogans against the Russians and President Boris Yeltsin, and carried green Chechen posters and banners and pictures of Chechen President Dudayev.

The posters carried humanitarian slogans urging the world to champion the Chechen issue, which is basically an Islamic cause. Many slogans against the Russians and President Yeltsin read: "Yeltsin Is a Murderer; Stop Bombing the Civilians; Get Out of Chechnya."

Approximately 300 citizens, including many children, women, and elderly, took part in the sit-in. It is worth noting that the Popular Committee for Supporting the Chechen People, which was set up after the establishment of the Republic of Chechnya, is collecting financial and medical donations and blood for Chechnya in order to support the Chechens against the Russian intervention.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Arrives for Talks

Arab-Israeli Negotiations Discussed

JN2512132894 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Talal Sat'an al-Hasan, minister of state for foreign affairs, and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Viktor Posuvalyuk met at the Foreign Ministry in Amman today. Their discussions were about the Middle East, the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, and the state of the negotiations on other Arab-Israeli tracks.

Al-Hasan reiterated Jordan's commitment to comprehensive peace in the Middle East and interest in coordinating with other Arab parties. Peace for Jordan, al-Hasan emphasized, is a national option. He voiced the hope the peace process in the region will be for the good of all parties concerend.

The ministers also talked about ties between Jordan and Russia and considered how they could be enhanced.

Mr. Posuvalyuk arrived in Amman from Damascus, continuing a regional tour.

Crown Prince Receives Posuvalyuk

JN2512155794 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan received Viktor Posuvalyuk, Russian President Boris Yeltsin's personal envoy, at his office at the Royal Court today. The talks dealt with a number of joint issues, Russia's support for the Middle East peace process, and some other issues, particularly the Chechen issue.

Attending the meeting were Talal Sat'an al-Hasan, minister of state for foreign affairs; 'Awni al-Khasawinah, legal adviser to his highness; and the Russian ambassador in Amman.

Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali also received Viktor Posuvalyuk at his office at the Parliament today.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed issues related to the Middle East peace process, its results, relations between Russia and Jordan, and means of promoting them. They also stressed the need to maintain these deep-rooted relations.

King Husayn Reviews Joint Interests

JN2512160994 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received at the Royal Court today Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk, who is touring the region to follow up on the peace process, especially since Russia is one of the sponsors of peace in the Middle East.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and regional and international issues of joint interest. His majesty discussed with Posuvalyuk the Middle East peace process. His majesty stressed Jordan's firm support for the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in this region, and the need to reactivate the peace process on the other Arab tracks.

Attending the meeting were al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, Royal Court chief; Marwan al-Qasim, political adviser to his majesty; Talal al- Hasan, minister of state for foreign affairs; and the Russian ambassador to Jordan.

Prime Minister Clarifies Stand on Chechnya

JN2512180794 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan received Viktor Posuvalyuk, Russian President Boris Yeltsin's personal envoy, at his office at the Royal Court today. [passage omitted]

Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali also received Viktor Posuvalyuk at his office at the Parliament today.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed issues related to the Middle East peace process, its results, relations between Russia and Jordan, and means of promoting them. They also stressed the need to maintain these deep-rooted relations.

Dr. al-Majali also reviewed with the Russian envoy the current developments in Chechnya. He clarified the Jordanian Government's stand toward this issue, which stresses the principle of resorting to dialogue and reason to settle controversial issues to avoid further bloodshed of innocent victims.

The prime minister wished the Russian envoy success in his mission and said he hoped for positive results to satisfy all the parties to the conflict.

Attending the meeting were Talal Sat'an al-Hasan, minister of state for foreign affairs, and the Russian ambassador in Amman.

Prime Minister Meets With Israeli Officials

JN2512180394 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1400 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 25 Dec (WAKH)—Jordanian Prime Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali today met in Amman with Etan Ben-Tzur, the deputy director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

Discussion during the meeting focused on bilateral cooperation in various fields, particularly agriculture.

The meeting was attended for the Israeli side by Ehud Ghul, deputy director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry for international cooperation affairs.

Information Minister Speaks on Israeli Relations

NC2612095094 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 26 Dec 94

[Telephone interview with Information Minister Jawad al-'Anani, in Amman, by Fawzi al-Jundi, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Jundi] Dr. al-'Anani, welcome to the program.

[Al-'Anani] Thank you.

[Al-Jundi] Mr. Minister, do you think Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's upcoming visit to Jordan will reflect positively on Jordanian-Israeli [as heard] relations?

[Al-'Anani] Jordan is very eager to maintain the best relations with all its Arab brothers. Differences in opinion should remain only because there exist basic strategic considerations and a need for Arab coordination and integration during these critical circumstances. President 'Arafat's visit should be viewed within this context, especially in light of the strong and intimate relations that constantly bind the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples.

[Al-Jundi] Dr. al-'Anani, it is known that the Palestinians have expressed dissatisfaction with the addition of a paragraph in the Jordanian-Israeli agreement on Jordan's religious jurisdiction over Islamic sacred sites in Jerusalem. Will the talks with President 'Arafat focus on this point?

[Al-'Anani] I think this topic will naturally surface during the talks. However, I would like to clarify one point: Jordan has explained its position more than once. His Highness Prince Hasan made statements relating to this during the economic summit in Casablanca. His highness also met Faysal al-Husayni when the latter visited Jordan before the latest Islamic summit in Casablanca. Statements made by the Jordanian prime minister to the Jordanian parliament and to many Arab media also clarified Jordan's position. Jordan views this matter objectively. The holy places in Jerusalem are now being managed and looked after by Jordan. Jordan will not abandon this responsibility except to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian leadership when they are able to exercise it. We only want to avoid creating a vacuum which some Israeli extremists might take advantage of. Those extremists actually did take legal action demanding that the Israeli Government control those holy cites. The issue for Jordan, then, is nothing but an endeavor to preserve the most sacred of Islamic sites in this holy city. As regards geographic and legal sovereignty, it will be for the Palestinian National Authority when, God willing, it establishes its entity and makes Jerusalem its capital.

[Al-Jundi] Dr. al-'Anani, do you think the warm peace between Jordan and Israel will reflect negatively on Jordanian-Palestinian relations?

[Al-'Anani] I do not think so because Jordan is anxious to maintain the best possible relations with the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian people. We have always, under all circumstances, sought to coordinate with the Palestinians. I believe that Jordan was the only country that kept its bridges with the Palestinian territory open in 1967. In this, Jordan bore a heavy burden, and it cannot now spoil this relationship. At the end of the day, we are one people with common strategic interests. We are also eager to establish strong and intimate relations with every Arab country—relations that are not affected by any passing cloud. We want the air to remain clear, and we want to constantly serve the interests of the two peoples.

[Al-Jundi] Dr. al-'Anani, in earlier statements to the Voice of the Arabs, Faysal al-Husayni, who is in charge of Jerusalem affairs at the Palestinian National Authority, said it was wrong [for Jordan] to raise the issue of Jerusalem with Israel because this question should only be discussed between the Jordanians and Palestinians. What do you think of this?

[Al-'Anani] We seek coordination with the brothers at the Palestinian National Authority, as I said. But the question of Jerusalem concerns not only Jordan and Palestine, but many Arab countries. We should not take the issue out of its correct context. We in Jordan are eager to resolve this issue bilaterally. However, at the same time, we cannot ignore certain circumstances. Sometimes certain texts are proposed, and we have to comment and take positions on them. Bilateralism does not mean that we keep the issue between ourselves, but means that if a subject is raised in a wider circle, we adopt a unified and coordinated position.

[Al-Jundi] Dr. al-'Anani, before we end this telephone conversation, let us talk about the Middle East market. What is Jordan's view on the importance of coordination among the Arab sides to ensure that such a market will be in the interest of the Arab nation and not a burden on it?

[Al-'Anani] I think this (?question should be addressed) not only to Jordan but to all Arab countries. Whether there is a Middle East market or not, reality dictates that we all reconsider our inter-Arab relations. Does the current level of inter-Arab trade—which does not exceed 7 percent, and which drops to under 4 percent if we deduct (?oil trade)—represent a state of Arab economic integration? Does the exchange of labor, transport within the Arab world, and investments among the Arab countries convince us that relations are at their best? I do not think that ideas like the Middle East market or the peace process should prevent Arab integration. Irrespective of the circumstances around us, we should examine how we can strengthen our inter-Arab economic relations. I do not think that any regional or international developments can obstruct such integration if the necessary political will is available.

[Al-Jundi] Thank you, Mr. Minister.

[Al-'Anani] You are welcome.

Al-'Anani on Conditions for 'Arafat Visit

JN2512102794 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 25 Dec 94 p 1

[Report by correspondent Nirmin Murad]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Arrangements for a meeting between His Majesty King Husayn and Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat in Amman are under way but the Jordanian side says it is not ready for "another formality meeting" and insists that any visit by Mr. 'Arafat to the Kingdom should include signing agreements and substantive talks.

Palestinian sources in Amman said that Mr. 'Arafat was "interested in visiting Amman this week" but that the Jordanian side had not scheduled a date for the visit.

" 'Arafat wants to visit Jordan this week," a Palestinian source who asked he remains anonymous told the JORDAN TIMES. "But the Jordanian government has not yet fixed a date for his visit because of the pending issues between the two sides."

Information Minister Jawad al-'Anani, in an interview with the JORDAN TIMES, said that while the Kingdom welcomes a visit by Mr. 'Arafat "neither side can subject both peoples to another formality meeting."

"We need to go into substance and we need to sign agreements," he said.

"Jordan views the visit of Chairman 'Arafat, when it happens, which will be the first after 'Arafat's entry into Palestinian territory, as coming at a time when many issues have reached ripening age," he said.

The visit, Dr. al-'Anani said, "must address issues and should bear fruit and to do that it needs preparatory work."

Among the most important pending issues between the Jordanian government and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) are an economic agreement governing monetary and trade relations between the Kingdom and the West Bank as well as arrangements for border crossings and other security-related issues.

Many of these issues have been discussed by Jordanian and Palestinian officials during a series of intermittent meetings over the past three years but none materialised into signed agreements.

The Jordanian government, although officially maintaining a conciliatory tone towards the situation of Palestinians under Israeli occupation and the difficult situations of the newly-established Palestinian Authority in Gaza and Jericho, nevertheless feel uneasy about Mr. 'Arafat's failure to ratify agreements reached between the Jordanian government and PNA-mandated officials.

Privately, some Jordanian officials have blamed Mr. 'Arafat personally for the increasing tension between the two sides and have said that they will not be used as "propaganda gimmick" to serve Mr. 'Arafat's internal Palestinian political considerations.

What appeared to be a decrease in the tension over the past couple of months between the Jordanian and the Palestinian Authority, with reports of a pending summit between the Jordanian and Palestinian leaderships, again suffered a setback in the Casablanca summit of the leaders of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

According to an official attending the Casablanca summit, the Palestinian foreign minister, Faruq Qaddumi, rejected a Jordanian proposal that would thank the Kingdom for its role in safeguarding Islamic holy sites and the services rendered in the years after the Israeli occupation.

"We did not request an acknowledgement of a future role for Jordan as a guardian of the holy sites, and the thanks we requested was only a routine affair in this kind of summit," the official told the JORDAN TIMES.

"This was construed as a political statement because the PLO does not trust Jordan's future intentions," the official said.

Mr. Qaddumi's rejection of the Jordanian proposal, according to Jordanian sources, went against an earlier agreement between His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan and Palestinian leader Faysal al-Husayni two weeks ago.

The PLO position, according to the sources, also appeared to contradict the spirit by which the PLO had received the statements of Crown Prince Hasan in the Casablanca economic conference in October which dealt with Jordan's Awqaf role in the West Bank.

"It really put a dent in the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship," Dr. al-'Anani had told the JORDAN TIMES in response to a question over the results of the Casablanca summit.

But Dr. al-'Anani said: "Mr. 'Arafat is welcome to visit Jordan despite what happened in Casablanca because the relations between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples are not based on ad hoc positions as was the case in Casablanca."

"This is a relationship that stems from deep-rooted considerations and interests," he said.

AFP adds from Gaza City:

Mr. 'Arafat will set a date soon for his first visit to Amman since Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, a Palestinian official said Saturday.

Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, Mr. 'Arafat's spokesman, denied earlier reports that the trip would take place Sunday.

"We have not fixed a date for President 'Arafat's visit to the Jordanian capital, Amman," he said.

But he added "the two sides will very soon agree on a meeting."

Minister Calls Jordan-Israel 'Alliance' 'Hellish'

NC2512063094 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has said that a hellish alliance has emerged in the Middle East between Israel and Jordan to confront the Lebanese-Syrian alliance in war and even in a supposed settlement. He said that this alliance will not succeed in imposing any new equation in the region and is doomed as the Baghdad Pact.

Buwayz Foresees Action on Lebanese, Syrian Tracks

NC2612161794 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has stated that next year will be alive with activity within the peace process. He said that the prominent issues in the next stage will be the Lebanese and Syrian files.

Speaking to guests who visited him at his home in al-Zuq today, Buwayz remarked:

[Begin recording] Progress on the various files is linked to many factors. I am not going to state them all now because there are too many. Progress hinges on Israel's ability to make some progress. It also depends on the type, difficulty, and size of the file in question. It is linked to domestic conditions, both electoral and otherwise, in each concerned country. Sometimes it is linked to psychological factors. The Jordanian file was not a major one, neither in its substance nor the problems it posed. Of course, progress on that track might have been psychologically important. However, in connection with such an issue as the occupation of territories, the Jordanian file was not as delicate as the Lebanese or Syrian files.

I believe that the priority that has been given to the various files bears no direct relationship to their importance. At any rate, since the peace is intended to be comprehensive, I believe that the prominent files will be the Lebanese and Syrian files in the next year, particularly as the Palestinian issue is following its own separate track and the Jordanian problem has been tackled in some fashion. The Lebanese and Syrian files will either proceed toward a comprehensive peace that will strengthen the agreements reached on the other tracks or—and I must say this frankly—if they make no progress, I fear that the achievements made on the other tracks will be threatened. This peace is all tied up together and one missing link will threaten the rest. Lebanon is dealing with this issue according to certain principles that it cannot abandon. At the same time Lebanon cannot play a passive or rejectionist role. Lebanon wants this peace and wishes to see it happen in line with its sovereignty, independence and the liberation of its territories. We cannot concede principle. If we see a positive trend to restore Lebanese rights, we will of course respond positively, objectively, and reasonably. If there are no positive signs, no one can blame Lebanon if it refuses to throw itself headlong into the process. [end recording]

Hizballah Warns of New Afghanistan in Chechnya

NC2312223594 Paris AFP in English 2222 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Dec 23 (AFP)—The Iranian-backed Hizballah Friday [23 December] condemned Russia's military intervention in the breakaway republic of Chechnya and warned against a repeat of the "Soviet invasion" of Afghanistan.

"The claims of the Kremlin rulers of a new era of democracy and freedom collapsed when they came up against the Moslem rock in Chechnya," the Shiite Moslem fundamentalist group said in a statement.

"Russian reinforcements show that Moscow is preparing for a repeat of the invasion of Afghanistan and to carry out more massacres against Moslems as it has in the past," the statement added.

Russian troops were sent to Chechnya on December 11 to crush the rebel republic's three-year-old independence bid.

The Soviet army pulled out of Afghanistan in 1990 after more than 10 years of warfare with mujahedin or Islamic fighters.

Hizballah also condemned the "silence of the international community, notably of the United Nations Security Council, which does not take action until western interests are affected."

Hizballah Issues Statement on Bahrain Incidents

NC2512074094 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Observers in Bahrain expect demonstrations to continue in the two villages of Jidd Hafs and Sanabis to mark the passage of a week since the death of the uprising's martyrs. They point out that demonstrators will go to those two areas to participate in the funeral services of two martyrs who died in the bloody clashes last week and to pay tribute to them.

In the context of the stances adopted on the Bahrain incidents, Hizballah has announced that the government's repression of popular action demonstrates that the Bahraini regime—which is incapable of discussing the aspirations of the people who reject the regime's detrimental policies—is seeking to contain the problem through police repression and campaigns that have netted hundreds of detainees and left dozens of citizens dead or wounded.

In a statement it issued on this, Hizballah said that the unjustified backing that the Bahraini regime has received from neighboring governments reveals a desire to abort the Gulf nations' hopes for greater freedom, representative government, and active participation in shaping a proud, prosperous future for their countries.

The statement continued: Some Gulf regimes, including the Bahraini regime, operate under U.S. security and political commands. This reinforces our conviction that the suppression of the population serves foreign security concerns that are directly linked with the interests of the powers of global arrogance operating in the region.

Hizballah added: Trying to thwart the Gulf nations' aspirations and rights by issuing a warning against the so-called wave of religious extremism and fundamentalism will not solve the problem but will simply postpone it and keep its fires smoldering as in a temporarily dormant volcano.

Hizballah's statement advised the Bahraini authorities not to resort to suppression but to discuss the opposition's just demands in a responsible spirit. It pointed out to them that recent experiences prove that national aspirations cannot be aborted or contained.

Hizballah expressed solidarity with the Bahraini people's demands and stressed that it does not see any sectarian propensity in these demands. It said they are just, patriotic demands; and, if they are fulfilled, this will serve the Bahraini people's interests, dignity, and stability.

Hizballah Claims Anti-SLA Operation

NC2512133694 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1215 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah has declared that its fighters have detonated an explosive device as a Lahdist [South Lebanese Army, SLA] patrol was passing in the Tayr Harfa village in the western sector of the occupied border strip today. Hizballah affirmed that the eight patrol member were either killed or wounded in the blast.

[AFP at 1230 GMT on 25 December in a Beirut-datelined report adds the following:

["The Iranian-backed Hizballah said it killed or wounded eight pro-Israeli militiamen in an attack in the Jewish state's self-declared security zone in south Lebanon on Sunday [25 December].

["A spokesman for the Shiite Moslem fundamentalist group told AFP its guerrillas had exploded a roadside bomb as a vehicle carrying a South Lebanon Army militia patrol passed by.

[" 'All members of the patrol were wounded or killed by the explosion' near Tayr Harfa in the western sector of the occupied zone, the spokesman said.

["Two hours earlier the pro-Syrian Amal movement said it had exploded a bomb under a vehicle full of Israeli intelligence agents on the road to the Christian town of Jazzin in south Lebanon.

["Neither of the two attacks was immediately confirmed by security officials in the security zone.

["Hizballah, which spearheads anti-Israeli attacks in the region, killed two Israeli soldiers and wounded seven others on Friday."]

Hizballah Leader Confers With Syria's Khaddam

NC2712071994 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The current situation in the south was the topic of discussion in Damascus between Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and the Hizballah delegation led by Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah.

The delegation said that Khaddam has reiterated Syria's firm support for Lebanon in its liberation, reconstruction, and development efforts. Hizballah issued a statement at the end of the talks, saying that the conferees praised the resistance operations against the Israeli enemy. The conferees also condemned all the Israeli desperate attempts to sow death and destruction among civilians, stressing that the Sfayr blast was aimed at undermining the peace and security process and at fomenting internal problems to overshadow Lebanon's principal issue, namely the occupation of a cherished part of its soil.

'Resistance' Says SLA Vehicle Blown Up

NC2512113094 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1115 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The Lebanese Resistance, Amal, has announced that one of its groups has detonated an explosive device inside a Mercedes belonging to Lahd's Army [South Lebanese Army, SLA] on the Saydun road, killing its occupants, according to the claims of the resistance statement.

Israeli Sources Deny SLA Casualties in Operation

TA2512154394 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Military sources in Israel have announced that there were no casualties among SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldiers when a bomb exploded in the western sector of the security zone this afternoon. Our correspondent Yo'av Aviv reports that the terrorists fired at the Shaqif al-Hardun region and that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA returned the fire. Hizballah announced earlier that SLA soldiers were hurt when the bomb exploded.

Citizens Arrested for 'Assisting Resistance'

NC2612142894 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] According to reports from inside the occupied border strip, a joint military force comprising Israeli and Lahdist [South Lebanese Army, SLA] personnel raided dozens of houses in the townships of Dibbin and Balat and arrested Jamil Husayn Ahmad, 'Awatif Muhammad Dib, 'Amir Ahmad, and Ibrahim Ahmad. The four, all residents of Balat, were transferred to the al-Khiyam prison camp on charges of assisting resistance fighters.

Another unit of the army of the agent Lahd [SLA] erected a checkpoint on the agricultural road that links the Nahr al-Hasbani area with Hasbayya's olive groves. It prevented citizens from reaching their fields by car and forced them to get there on foot.

Two IDF Soldiers Killed, 7 Wounded in South

TA2312152494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 23 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Two IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers were killed and seven others were wounded—two sustained medium wounds and five light injuries—from terrorist fire at IDF outposts in south Lebanon's eastern sector this morning.

One of the fatalities is Sergeant Gay Suda'i, 19, of Tel Aviv. The family of the other fatality has been informed. The seven casualties are now being treated at Rambam Hospital. Our correspondents Karmela Menashe and Yo'av Aviv report that terrorists fired at IDF outposts on the 'Ali al-Tahir ridge near Beaufort Castle from 0700. The fatalities and casualties occurred in that shelling. At the same time, terrorists also shelled settlements and outposts in other sectors. The IDF returned fire and hit several terrorists. Israel Air Force helicopters and aircraft shelled Hizballah targets in the Jabal Safi area and north of the security zone. All our planes returned safely to base. Rambam Hospital said that most of the casualties are hospitalized in the Orthopedic Department after being hit by shrapnel, especially in the limbs.

Prime Minister Rabin said we might have to improve defenses of IDF outposts in south Lebanon, but that this is not an easy thing to do. He also said the reality in Lebanon is not easy, but we have to deal with it and change our ways of action from time to time. The main aim of Israeli policy is to prevent the life of the inhabitants along the northern border from being disturbed and to reduce the damage to the residents as much as possible. The prime minister rejected proposals to expand the security zone in order to distance the terrorists. He said such a move would require additional IDF troops and increased military activity, which in the long run could lead to even more casualties. Mr. Rabin spoke with correspondents at the Northern Command where he arrived to observe events from close up.

IDF Repels 'Terrorists'; Quiet Reported

TA2412201494 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The northern border is now quiet after the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] repelled an attempted attack by the terrorists on one of its outposts. Our forces did not sustain any casualties. Our correspondent Yo'av Aviv reports that at about 2000, the terrorists fired a barrage at outposts near the 'Ali al- Tahir ridge. They later tried to attack with light weapons fire but were repulsed, and the area is currently quiet.

Israelis Admit Mistakenly Firing on Fishermen

NC2412152694 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] One person was killed and three others were wounded while fishing in an area where fishing is banned except with the South Lebanese Army's [SLA] express permission because the area in question is used as a corridor by saboteurs. The casualties occurred when an Israeli tank suspected the four of being saboteurs and strangers to the area.

In remarks to our correspondent, General (Giora 'Anbar), commander of the Israeli liaison unit in the south, conveyed his great regrets over the incident. He also telephoned the families of the deceased and wounded persons, expressing his regret. He promised to extend all possible medical and other forms of assistance to the wounded. Our correspondent adds that a detailed report on the incident is being prepared and will be submitted to the concerned authorities. Our correspondent has also learned that the deceased were laid to rest at 1500 today.

This afternoon the saboteurs shelled an Israeli army position in al-Nabi Taha area but the attack caused no casualties. SLA and Israeli artillery returned the fire.

At noon the saboteurs bombarded the area, surrounding the Bra'shit positions from their positions in Shaqra, Safad al-Battikh, and the town of Bra'shit.

Last night the saboteurs fired several artillery shells at the Bayt Yahun, Bra'shit, and al-Shaqif positions but failed to cause any casualties.

[In a related item, Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic at 1415 GMT on 24 December reports: "REUTER quotes sources of the Lahd forces as saying that a shell fired by mistake by an Israeli tank killed a civilian and wounded three others in an area lying to the north of the occupied border strip. The sources added that As'ad Khidr, 25, was killed and that two of his brothers and a friend were injured by the shell which fell in the Hama al-Dabbaghah area in the eastern sector of the south, just north of the border strip. The sources said that the tank crew mistakenly believed that the four, all natives of Hasbayya, were resistance fighters."]

Radio Reveals Information on Suburb Explosion

NC2712072094 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 27 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] According to official sources, the security services, which have been charged with investigating the explosion in the southern suburb, have obtained a new piece of information that could reveal the identity of the perpetrators and the instigating party. The sources said that a number of suspects have been detained and that the official departments will reveal significant information on this issue within the next 48 hours.

A Hizballah leader has stressed that an Israeli network was behind the operation, adding that a number of the network's members are now being detained by the security services.

Commentary Demands 'Crucial Turn' in Israeli Position

JN2712162594 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 27 Dec 94

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nobody in the world believes it is possible to achieve comprehensive peace in the Middle East without Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. Likewise, nobody believes it is possible to continue the current peace efforts without a genuine and crucial turn in Israel's position in terms of responding to the Syrian and Lebanese demand for total withdrawal. The three-year peace process is liable to collapse unless Israel puts an end to the policy of evasion and procrastination which it has been pursing since the Madrid conference.

Concerned quarters and world politicians realize that what has been achieved so far by the peace process is extremely fragile and unable to stand against events and changes. This is especially true since the Palestinian people's opposition to the Oslo agreement is growing and since popular Arab quarters have actually condemned separate deals and regarded every agreement concluded in isolation from Syria and Lebanon as a circumvention of Arab rights, a blow to the unity of the pan-Arab cause, and a relinquishment of the Arab nation's supreme interests.

Because the international community, led by the United States, is interested in a durable peace in the region, there has been a concentration of efforts on the Syrian track, given that it is the key to comprehensive peace. Syria responded to those efforts, proceeding from its firm faith in the importance of peace and the need to remove the Middle East from the whirlpool of war and conflict. However, Syria is looking forward to a just and honorable peace, not a partial deal. A just, honorable peace requires a turn in the Israeli position, something Syrian negotiators have yet to sense.

The Washington meetings, under U.S. sponsorship and with U.S. participation, were designed to exchange views. They ended without achieving the desired progress because Israel maintained its previous policy, and, as usual, raised an endless series of impossible security demands. Those extremely disappointing demands are very far away from the resolutions of international legitimacy and the essence of the peace process. If they mean anything, they mean Israel does not believe in peace, and, indeed, does not want peace. Therefore, it raises security pretexts to justify maintaining its occupation of Arab territories and changing their features, as if the Madrid conference had not been convened in the first place and as if the entire world should adapt to Israel's expansionist ambitions and false concepts about the nature, dimensions, and objectives of peace.

As acknowledged by world politicians, peace is the ideal guarantee for security. However, through its numerous security pretexts, Israel glaringly seeks to interfere in the affairs of the Arab negotiating parties and to compromise their national sovereignty. Israel also poses as a policeman with extensive authority to monitor the moves of certain Arab countries. It deliberately hints at such roles because it knows that Syria cannot accept what may contravene its national sovereignty and the UN Security Council resolutions.

From the outset, Syria agreed to equal and mutual security arrangements on both sides of the border area after the full restoration of the Golan Heights. However, it should be remembered that Syria, whose territory is occupied, needs security guarantees more than Israel. Since the beginning of the conflict in the region, the reports of the United Nations and international observation committees testify that Israel has always started the cease-fire violations and attacks against the Syrian side.

Southern Lebanon currently provides an adequate piece of evidence to prove the falsity of Israel's allegations. Lebanon is a daily victim to Israel's brutal land, sea, and air bombardment. However, Israel is demanding security arrangements from Lebanon as if Lebanon is the aggressor and Israel is victim.

Israel's policy of falsifying facts, distorting events, and twisting concepts is as old as Israel itself. Although Israel has a long record of falsification and deception, it is now naked before the international community. Syria wants peace and struggles for a true peace that entrenches the authority and resolutions of the international legitimacy. While Israel claims to be interested in peace, it works to undermine it. There is a vast difference between the genuine desire for peace and alleged desire for peace.

Israeli 'Obstacles' at Washington Meeting Noted

JN2712074194 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 27 Dec 94

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, AL-BA'TH discusses Syria's principled, fixed positions and Israeli contradictions. The paper says: There have been many contradictory statements on the part of many who are either pessimistic or optimistic about reaching peace with Syria in particular, and the Arabs in general.

The paper adds: Syria has no need to reply or clarify, because it has a fixed, indivisible strategy that is summed up in the need to regain all its rights to its occupied territory without any conditions, save those specified by Security Council resolutions and recommendations.

AL-BA'TH goes on: It is truly regrettable that the optimists, along with Israel, in some capitals have deliberately ignored the obstacles placed by Israel to the negotiations in Washington. Those people know that what the Israelis offered in the recent Washington meeting was not about peace; they only created obstacles to suspend or freeze the negotiations or abandon them altogether.

AL-BA'TH adds that Syria is assured about its position, capabilities, and the confidence of its people, under their wise leadership. Therefore, it is in no hurry.

The paper concludes: Syria, which rejects the logic of creating a tense atmosphere and dangerous circumstances, wants the aggressors to understand the fact—which they know very well—that fires often burn those who start them.

Paper: Rabin Should 'Learn a Lesson' From Lebanon

NC2412141794 Paris AFP in English 1216 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Dec 24 (AFP)—Syria said Saturday [24 December] that Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin should learn a lesson from the Lebanese resistance and withdraw his army from south Lebanon, following the latest attack that killed two Israeli soldiers.

Syria's official newspaper TISHRIN added that Israel's retaliatory shelling and missile attacks on Friday would only stiffen resistance to the Jewish state's self-declared "security zone" in south Lebanon.

"Israel has tried all sorts of terrorism and aggression to drag Lebanon into a separate deal but has failed and its new attacks will only strengthen Lebanon's determination and rejection of the effort," it said.

Rabin must "learn a lesson and tell his people the so-called security zone does not ensure security for the occupation forces and his army cannot prevent the national resistance from fulfilling its sacred duty," the paper said.

"Israel will only enjoy (calm) after it withdraws its soldiers from Lebanon and after it supports a just and comprehensive settlement leading to the return of occupied territory," TISHRIN added.

Rabin said Israel would have to step up security in the occupied zone following the Hizballah attack on Friday that killed two soldiers and wounded seven others. Retaliatory Israeli raids killed two Lebanese policemen, security officials in Lebanon said.

Syria has made no tangible progress in the talks it began with Israel at the Middle East peace conference in Madrid in 1991.

Negotiations are stalled mainly over the scope and timing of an eventual Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights captured from Syria in 1967 as well as over the type of peaceful relations to be established.

Khaddam, al-Shar' Meet Russia's Posuvalyuk

JN2612151994 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1300 today, Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam received Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk. The talks addressed the international state of affairs, the situation in the Middle East, the latest developments in the peace process, and bilateral ties.

Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' received Viktor Posuvalyuk earlier in the day. Assistant Foreign Minister Raslan 'Allush and Russian Ambassador in Damascus Viktor Gogitidze attended.

During the meeting, talks addressed developments in the peace process. In this regard, Posuvalyuk underscored Syria's pivotal role in establishing just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The talks also addressed the situation in Chechnya and the need to reach a political solution to this crisis, one that is based on dialogue and the use of peaceful means. The talks also touched on Syrian-Russian ties in various areas.

Afghanistan

Government Statement Denies Involvement in Chechnya

LD2512173994 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Statement issued by the Foreign Affairs Ministry; date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic State of Afghanistan seriously follows current events and developments in the Republic of Chechnya and is deeply concerned about the recent events in the republic and about the military operation of the Russian Federation forces against the Muslim people of Chechnya. Afghanistan is of the opinion that not only will the use of military pressure to resolve the problem not be fruitful but it will have negative effects for Russia and for the region. Based on the results of the invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union, Afghanistan is of the opinion that the leadership of Russia will agree with the view that the will of a nation cannot be crushed with acts of violence. Afghanistan strongly denies the allegation that Chechen individuals were given military training on Afghan soil, denies the participation of the Afghan mojahedin in the Chechen war, and considers these allegations as being far from the truth. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs profoundly hopes that the Russian Federation will solve, in a just manner, the current problem of Chechnya through talks and understanding instead of military operations.

Rocket Attack on Kabul Kills Four, Wounds 32

LD2412173394 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] After a few days' calm in the city of Kabul, yesterday and today Golboddin's militia fired rockets on the residential areas of Kabul city. BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY says that yesterday and today, Golboddin Hekmatyar's militia fired 24 rockets and mortar shells at the residential areas of Kabul city. As a result of these ruthless attacks, 4 oppressed residents of Kabul were martyred and 32 others were injured.

As an upshot of the Hekmatyar militia's rocket attacks, besides the loss of life, the residents of Kabul have also suffered material loss. A residence and three shops were destroyed. Qasim, a resident of Kabul, whose brother was martyred as a result of the rockets yesterday, said: While esteemed jehadi leaders, the UN, neighboring countries, and social centers inside the country and abroad are engaged in resolving problems related to Afghanistan, we do not know why Mr. Hekmatyar's militia fire rockets at the city and kill civilians.

Thirty Prisoners Reported Taken in Shia Clashes

LD2512181994 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Thirty of Mazari's men have been taken prisoner during an operation of Harakat-e Eslami, and the mojahedin have captured a number of their heavy and light weapons. The BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY reported to us that in a successful operation conducted in the direction of Kota-e Sangi yesterday, 30 of Mazari's men were taken prisoner and four pieces of 82 mm artillery, three RPG rocket launchers, three PK machine guns, 16 Kalashnikovs, five Makarovs and TT pistols, and a considerable amount of ammunition have been captured. No report has been given about the loss of life to Mazari's men as a result of the operation.

IRNA Reports Intensified Fighting in Various Areas

LD2612123494 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Fighting has intensified between the warring sides in several parts of Afghanistan. According to an IRNA report from Islamabad, fighting is taking place in the regions of Kota-e Sangi, Tappeh, Maranjan, Qal'eh, Heydar-Khani, Television Hill, and Kheyr-Khaneh in western and southwestern Kabul. The fighting is between the forces of Ahmad Shah Masud's Shura-ye Nezar [supervisory council] and the coordination council of the Islamic revolution [as heard], the side opposing President Borhanoddin Rabbani.

Clashes have also been reported in the two provinces of Kondoz and Jowzjan in northern Afghanistan and in parts of the provinces of Parvan and Baghlan.

Government Issues Statement on Transition of Power

LD2612201294 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 26 Dec 94

[Statement issued by the "Islamic State of Afghanistan"; date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of the God, the merciful, the compassionate. The Islamic State of Afghanistan is of the opinion that the only power with the right and authority to express an opinion and make a decision on the political regime and the state administration system belongs to the people of the country. The people are the real owners and the righteous heirs [words indistinct]. It is for this reason that over the past two years Afghanistan has gone to the opinion and vote of the people many times to reach an understanding and to find a solution that is acceptable to the whole nation of Afghanistan.

Because the basis of Afghanistan's policy is the ensuring of peace and security and the tranquility of the compatriots, by demonstrating flexibility and positive inclinations on various occasions, not only has the state supported the efforts made by the Afghans inside the country or by international organizations and friendly countries to put an end to the misunderstanding and tension and to consolidate and stabilize the situation in the country but also it has expressed its active readiness for any kind of cooperation and assistance. Being of the same opinion as the majority of our country's afflicted people, we are of the view that having broad practical experience in this field, the United Nations can actively and effectively play a positive role in ensuring peace in war-stricken Afghanistan. Therefore, in our opinion the UN-proposed mechanism, about which the Afghan state has previously expressed its views, and taking into account the conditions and demands of the nation of Afghanistan, will be implemented more quickly.

Dear compatriots, as at the beginning with Islamic and Afghan clarity and cordiality we told you that we were ready to accept the decision and will of our Muslim nation, now with the same cordiality and clarity we say that the leadership of the Islamic state is completely ready to execute its undertakings. On the basis of its previous stances, the state is ready to transfer power to a legal authority. We never wanted to preserve the power exclusively, and in the past we expressed our readiness for the transfer of power many times. In our opinion, unilateral transfer of power creates the ground for the opponents to make excuses. Therefore, the Islamic State of Afghanistan has appointed a delegation to start talks with the opposition. Afghanistan asks the opposition to appoint its delegation as a practical step in this respect as soon as possible in order to reach agreement through negotiation and exchange of views on such a condition or the formation of a mechanism to which the power can be transferred. The leadership of the Islamic State of Afghanistan has invited the esteemed leaders of all organisations and parties to come very urgently to Kabul city for consultation and make a decision in this respect. Similarly, all provinces are asked to send their representatives to the capital. It has also declared a unilateral and permanent cease-fire, and calls on the other side to observe it. The state has an historic responsibility before its people, country, sacred jihad, and Islamic regime. To implement this major responsibility it is ready to make any kind of sacrifice and practice self-denial. This nation, which has always in critical moments of history successfully marched with valor and bravery toward victory, will certainly solve the problems steadfastly at this historic juncture also, and will preserve the grand banner of Islam and national and Afghan heritage. The people want peace and calm. Our call to all, especially the Islamic countries, is to render honest cooperation, without any personal or group preference or dislike and taking into account the lofty national and Islamic interests, for the implementation of this goal. In its turn, the Islamic state is ready for any kind of efforts and [words indistinct] in this respect.

India

Pakistan Decision on Consulate Seen as 'Unjustified'

BK2612160094 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has described as unjustified the Pakistan Government's decision to close down the Indian Consulate General in Karachi. It has also rejected as completely unfounded the allegations made by Islamabad of interference by the Indian Consulate General in Pakistan's internal affairs.

Expressing deep regret over Pakistan's decision, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said such unilateral decision will have adverse impact on the lives of countless people in both countries. He also referred to the closure by Pakistan of its consulate in Bombay earlier this year.

The spokesman said while New Delhi perforce comply with Islamabad's request, the withdrawal of 18 staff members manning the consulate will lead to hardships to Pakistani citizens in getting visas. It will also create difficulties in maintaining people-to-people contacts and also commercial and cultural relations between the two countries.

The spokesman said the latest move by Pakistan is yet another manifestation of its consistently negative approach toward bilateral ties with India.

Announcing its decision to close down the Indian Consulate General in Karachi with immediate effect, the Pakistan Government asked India to withdraw its personnel within 10 days.

Radioactive Contamination in Uranium Mine Denied

BK2612161994 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government today denied recent reports in a section of the press that workers in the uranium mine in Jaduguda in Bihar and people living in nearby areas are exposed to radioactive contamination. It said radiation exposure to workers in the mine is well within the limits stipulated by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board. An official release in New Delhi today said the board continuously evaluates the overall impact of the operation in the Uranium Corporation of India mine at Jaduguda.

Iran

Velayati Meets With Cuban Foreign Minister Robaina

Robaina Reports on Cuban Economy

LD2412113494 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] The first round of talks between the Cuban and Iranian foreign ministers was held this morning .

During the talks, the Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina first gave a report on the progress of Cuba's free economy and added: Despite the pressures exerted by the United States to boycott Cuba, we have managed to stand on our own feet, thanks to our resistance and our friends' help. We have paid dearly to do that, but at the same time we are steadfast in our path.

During the meeting, Iranian Foreign Minister Mr. Velayati welcomed the expansion of the two countries' relations and referred to pressures exerted by the United States on the two countries of Iran and Cuba. He said: It is clear to everyone that the reason for the U.S. pressure is that Iran and Cuba are independent and they are trying to defend their independence. Those pressures are in fact a part of the price that Iran and Cuba have to pay for their independence.

Envoy Views U.S. Pressure, Human Rights

LD2412122594 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] In an interview with our correspondent, the Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina warned against unilateral decisions taken by some powerful countries of the world and said the consequences of such decisions are worrying for the whole world.

Mr. Roberto Robaina added: The unipolarity of the world has created a threatening situation, and UN decisions are made on a unilateral basis serving only the interests of some countries such as the United States. That is why cooperation between two international organizations—the Islamic Conference Organization and the Nonaligned Movement—as well as further cooperation between independent countries of the world, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran and Cuba, can be significant and decisive.

The Cuban foreign minister strongly criticized the UN General Assembly's recent resolutions on human rights and described them as unfair. He added: Before considering humanitarian issues, those who claim to support human rights intend to protect U.S. interests. He referred to human rights violations by the United States all over the world and said: The U.S. economic boycott of Cuba and political pressure against it do not conform with any humanitarian or human right criteria.

Finally the Cuban foreign minister described Tehran-Havana cooperation at world level as constructive. He stressed: The two countries can have close cooperation in various fields of commerce and economy.

Rafsanjani Welcomes Deeper Ties

LD2412151594 Tehran IRNA in English 1441 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 24, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here Saturday [24 December] welcomed expansion and deepening of Tehran-Havana relations and called as "necessary" practical steps to improve mutual cooperation.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani, who was speaking to the visiting Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina here Saturday, underscored the need for exchange of expert delegations between the two countries to get acquainted with each other's potentials and facilities and explore ways of mutual cooperation and deepening friendship bonds.

He expressed hope that the Cuban people would leave behind their difficulties under their firm will and efforts.

Robaina in return said that Cuba attached high significance to consolidation of its friendship and cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He said that practical ways had been surveyed to cement bilateral relations and that Havana was keen on promotion of its ties with Tehran in areas concerning such as transfer of technology, energy, pharmaceuticals, sugar, health and medicare.

Robaina also conveyed the best regards of the Cuban President Fidel Castro to President Rafsanjani and the Iranian people and thanked him for Iran's humanitarian positions regarding the issue of human rights and the sanctions imposed on Havana.

Visa Requirements with Cuba Lifted

LD2412204194 Tehran IRNA in English 2036 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 24, IRNA—The Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Government of Cuba here Saturday [24 December] lifted visa requirements for each other's nationals for visiting the other country.

The two countries also signed a letter of understanding at the end of the second round of talks between Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and the visiting foreign minister of Cuba Roberto Robaina.

The letter of understanding anticipates implementation of cultural agreements entered into betweeen Tehran and Havana earlier on, cooperation of the various government agencies of the two countries for transfer of pharmaceutical know-how and closer cooperation at the Non-Aligned Movement and the Interprliamentary Union.

Radio Views 'Agenda' of Relations

NC2512090594 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the conclusion of Foreign Minister Robaina's visit to Tehran, a memorandum of understanding was signed that will constitute the basis for cooperation between the two countries. According to this memorandum, the broadening of bilateral cooperation, followup on cultural and scientific cooperation, and international coordination on the Nonaligned Movement and the Interparliamentary Union [IPU] are on the agenda of Iran-Cuba relations.

In the past, Tehran and Havana have enjoyed extensive cooperation in the aforementioned fields, and the visit by the Cuban foreign minister to Tehran was a further affirmation of current cooperation as well as expanding it into new areas that would ensure reciprocal interests.

The Islamic Republic of Iran in the Persian Gulf and Cuba in the Caribbean region are both victims of U.S. hostility. These attacks—which, according to our foreign minister, are due to the independence of the two countries—constitute a basis for greater cooperation.

Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution and Iran's membership in the Nonaligned Movement, Iran and Cuba made immense efforts to revive this Movement. Now, the Nonaligned Movement, with more than a hundred members, is one of the most active groups in the international political sphere. The members of this Movement are seeking to prevent unilateral decisions on the international plane by the greater powers in the General Assembly and in the Security Council. Thus, in view of the prospective amendment of the UN Charter and the increase in the number of UN members, the Nonaligned Movement—with the efforts of the vanguard countries—has adopted a very active approach to the issue.

Numerous bilateral and multilateral meetings among the members provide suitable opportunities for coordinating and adopting common stances. For example, Iran and Cuba are both victims of U.S. military aggression, and accusations of human rights violations against them are constantly bandied about. The Cuban foreign minister believes that those who claim to be defenders of human rights are more interested in ensuring U.S. interests than in pursuing humanitarian issues. This is proved by the fact that the U.S. economic embargo against the Cubans and the political pressure against the Cuban Government do not conform to any of the criteria of human rights or humanitarianism.

Radio Examines Tension in Algeria, Hijacking

NC2612110694 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 26 Dec 94

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] With repressive measures being stepped up in Algeria, the situation in the country is deteriorating in an unprecedented manner. According to official statements issued by the Algerian forces every week, tens of Muslim combatants in Algeria are being martyred in armed clashes.

This has caused many security problems for the ruling party, even in the capital. Earlier, according to the Algerian ruling regime, the government had completely lost control of, and domination over, the affairs in other provinces and cities. Meanwhile, the international environment and world public opinion to put an end to these repressive actions and the strangulating atmosphere now prevailing in Algeria are putting great pressure on the coupist rulers of this country.

These pressures and protests, which mainly stem from the election process being halted in Algeria and the arrests and detention of tens of thousands of Algerian Muslims, has spilled over to the European countries in the past few months. A precise example of this pressure are the protests and marches in European countries in favor of the Muslims and the Algerian combatants. It is obvious that in such circumstances, the extensive dissemination of the report on the hijacking of a French airplane in Algeria can only exacerbate existing tension.

According to Western news agencies, simultaneous to the dissemination of the report on the hijacking of this plane, the attention of international and, in particular, European circles was drawn to the problems of Algeria and the critical condition in that country. With the landing of this airplane in a French port city, Algerian problems will be further highlighted for the French public. Of course, according to international television, Algeria remains as before at the time of this incident, that is, with sporadic clashes between the security forces and the combatant Muslims continuing at their former intensity.

In this regard, some Western commentators believe that, with the announcement of the demands of the hijackers for the release of the leaders and members of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front [FIS], stringent security has been imposed on prisons and detention sites in Algeria. In any case, the Algerian armed forces are seeking to prevent all new actions by the Islamists to take over the reins of administration in this country. This is precisely the same effort that the leaders of the Western countries—by avoiding mention of the current realities in Algeria—are making in order to eliminate it as an international issue.

Carter Bosnia Visit Viewed as U.S. 'Cover'

LD2412145794 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1105 GMT 24 Dec 94

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A cease-fire agreement in Bosnia-Herzegovina will be implemented today. [passage omitted]

Informed observers in the region believe that rather than being a genuine effort to bring peace in the Bosnian crisis, Carter's visit to Bosnia is a cover for a U.S. Administration plan, namely that the U.S. has changed its stance once again and is ready to make key concessions to the Serbs so they can break out of their political isolation. These observers believe that Washington's new stance is due to the White House officials determination to guide the peace negotiations in that region, even if ending the clashes leads to a situation which would previously have been unacceptable.

The change in the Bosnian policy of the U.S. Administrtation, which is now seeking to pin the medal of a diplomatic Bosnian peace on its chest, follows the international contact group's slow start in imposing peace, and on this basis the contact group decided to agree to a merger of Bosnian Serb territory in a confederation with Belgrade and the creation of greater Serbia.

The United States, which on the surface opposed the Serbs, is now instigating a new movement through which it is seeking to free the Serbs from further international isolation. The White House's strategy of compromise has been deemed essential following the Serbs' resistance against economic pressure and the limited and ineffective military threats of NATO and the United Nations. Previously, addressing the U.S. Congress, Clinton promised that if the Serbs did not accept the contact group's peace plan he would unilaterally lift the arms embargo on the Muslims. Of course, the conditions created by the other members of the contact group and the United Nations led to complicated dealings that made it impossible to lift the arms embargo on the Muslims. [passage omitted]

On the whole, it has to be said that the contact group's plots, the UN support for them, and the Islamic countries' failure, because of their political allegiances, to take serious action have placed the Muslims in a situation which may force them to accept a confederation between the Bosnian Serbs and Serbia-Montenegro at a time when there is still no guarantee that the Serbs will recognize Bosnia and halt the war and bloodshed in the region. [passage omitted]

Commentary Views Hizballah Operations in Lebanon

NC2412071194 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 24 Dec 94

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The attack by Islamic resistance forces on Zionist positions in the 'Ali al-Tahir heights in southern Lebanon, which—according to the Zionist regime—resulted in the death of two Zionist soldiers, showed that the Lebanese Hizballah has the military initiative in the occupied territories in southern Lebanon to a large extent. This military initiative is valuable in that the occupying Zionist forces were on full alert when yesterday's operations took place.

After the dastardly assassination of two Hizballah officials in Beirut, the Hizballah accused the Zionist regime of perpetrating this crime and stated that it would retaliate soon on the southern Lebanon front. Also, with their attacks on a Lebanese army position in the south, which resulted in the death of two Lebanese soldiers and seven others being wounded, the Zionist forces started to worry about a retaliation by the Lebanese forces.

The attack by the Islamic resistance forces on the Zionist forces, which were on full military alert, and the heavy losses inflicted on them shows the weakness and helplessness of the Zionist aggressors on the one hand and the false propaganda of the compromising Arab governments, which use the military superiority of the Zionist regime as a justification for their acts, on the other hand.

Political analysts believe that the southern Lebanese front is one of the most significant indicators of the political-military equation that rules the Middle East crisis. By occupying more than 1,000 km in southern Lebanon and transforming this border area into a security belt, the Zionist regime hoped to push the war zone back from the borders of the occupied territories and to free its citizens from war by imposing war on others. However, this plan by Tel Aviv was thwarted thanks to the determination of Lebanon's Islamic resistance in ridding southern Lebanon of the occupiers. Thus, the Zionist regime has fallen into the same trap that it set for others.

Currently the Zionist regime is not only unable to pursue its objectives for occupying southern Lebanon, many blows have been inflicted on it, and it is helpless for the first time because of the repeated operations by Islamic resistance. In other words, the Zionist regime is facing a complete impasse. It can not advance to thwart Islamic resistance operations, because this will make its vulnerable forces a target of more Islamic resistance attacks and, as a result, greater damage. However, it cannot retreat from the occupied territories in southern Lebanon, because this will mean the complete defeat of Zionist logic and propaganda, which is based on military initiative and superiority. This, in turn, primarily forms the basis for the compromise process.

Nateq-Nuri Sends Christmas Message to Christians

LD2612134994 Tehran IRNA in English 1336 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA—Majlis Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri sent a message of felicitation to his Christian counterparts on the occasion of Christmas.

In his message, the speaker expressed hope that the coming Christian year would be a year of understanding, friendship and justice and regretted that at the advent of the new year war, bloodshed and aggression raged in different parts of the world.

As an example, he said what was going on in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a matter of disgrace for the late 20th century man, for Europe and the West which would remain for ever.

He further expressed regret over the situation in occupied Palestine and said the West's support for the hegemony of the Zionist regime was not justifiable.

Nateq-noted that Islam and Christianity were the closest among the religions and stressed that Muslims and Christians have been living with friendship and in tranquility in Iran since times.

Rafsanjani Delivers Christmas Statement

LD2512094894 Tehran IRNA in English 0912 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA—On the occasion of birth anniversary of Jesus Christ (pbuh) [peace be upon him] and on the eve of the new year, President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani felicitated heads of Christian states.

"I and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran express my heartfelt congratulations to you on the occasion of auspicious birth anniversary of Jesus Christ (pbuh), the messenger of justice, peace, and freedom," a statement released by the public relations bureau of the president office, said here today.

The president also expressed hope that the new year would witness further expansion of friendship and cooperation among nations in order to put an end to oppression and pave way for solidarity of all divine religions and human salvation.

Clandestine Radio on Domestic Power Struggle

NC2612150094 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1630 GMT 25 Dec 94

[Station commentary: "Continuing Power Struggle in the Clerical Regime"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Internal wrangling and power struggles have always characterized the ruling junta of the Islamic Republic. With simultaneous economic and political crises, these struggles among the various factions of the clerical regime are becoming more intense and overt.

In this period of the regime's existence, this power struggle can be clearly seen in the rumors and discussions of the possibility of a change in the Constitution or the elimination of Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Hashemi-Rafsanjani is in his second term as president, and various groups and cliques of the regime are engaged in a fierce controversy regarding his position and status.

On most occasions, newspaper correspondents have asked officials of the regime and even Hashemi-Rafsanjani himself about this. The issue is whether Hashemi-Rafsanjani should be removed from the Islamic Republic's political scene or the Constitution of the country should be changed to allow his retention and the post of the president should be delegated to Hashemi-Rafsanjani permanently or for a prolonged period. The issue of Hashemi-Rafsanjani remaining in the center of power of the clerical regime would thereby be resolved once and for all.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani's agents are bandying about and publicizing rumors of a possible change in the Constitution so that they can secure their own positions behind Hashemi-Rafsanjani and defend his position in the Islamic Republic. The faction opposing Hashemi-Rafsanjani, which has mostly emerged in the Majles and is supported by Khamene'i to a certain extent, is seeking to end Hashemi—Rafsanjani's tenure as president when the second term of his presidency ends, so that he will be removed from the sphere of power in the Islamic Republic. For this purpose, they announce in the press that the possibility of a change in the Constitution is too farfetched and that such a step would not benefit the system.

Similarly, in answer to a question by a foreign correspondent regarding the possibility of a change in the Constitution, Hashemi-Rafsanjani gave a conditional response and said that changing the Constitution is not necessary or mandatory if his government forges ahead with the Second Five-Year Plan and it is implemented optimally. In addition, the Speaker of the clerical Majles has commented in this regard saying: A change in the Constitution is not expedient, and it seems unlikely. Following these remarks by the Majles Speaker, some of the deputies who are Hashemi-Rafsanjani's opponents protested to the Speaker on his lenient tone in this regard and asked why he had not rejected the issue of a change in the Constitution categorically.

The clique opposing Hashemi-Rafsanjani, which has been in conflict with him over the past two years since immediately after his reelection as president, has wrested the centers of power from him one after another. For example, even Hashemi-Rafsanjani's brother was removed from the post of the director of the Voice and Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Hashemi-Rafsanjani's cabinet was split for and against him. Now this clique wants to lay the entire responsibility for all of the Islamic Republic's failures and the economic stagnation of the country and all its economic, cultural, social, and political difficulties on Hashemi-Rafsanjani and distance Khamene'i from these problems.

It is for this reason that this clique is seeking with all its might to thwart another reelection for Hashemi-Rafsanjani and to attain this objective by using the pretext of safeguarding the sanctity of the Constitution and vociferously opposing any changes in the Constitution.

KEYHAN newspaper, which is currently the mouthpiece of the faction opposing Hashemi-Rafsanjani, commented thus on the defense of the Constitution: The stability of the Constitution is tantamount to the stability of the country, and any measures to change it would be akin to surrendering the country to instability or paving the way for instability.

The faction opposing Hashemi-Rafsanjani considers stability and consolidation a necessary requisite of the Constitution and any (?tampering) with the Constitution is construed as a threat against the country and the system and is viewed as a serious danger for the country.

If a few years ago, Khomeyni deemed it expedient to change the Constitution for Hashemi-Rafsanjani's sake and to abolish the post of the prime minister so that the reins of power may be completely in Hashemi-Rafsanjani's hands, today, Hashemi-Rafsanjani's opponents consider it expedient not to change the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, which should remain as a national charter.

They believe that if the Constitution needs changing once every few years, it will generate doubts about its validity. This is because it is the stability and immutability of a constitution that imbues it with the qualities of a national charter and makes it what it is.

All evidence indicates that the failure of Hashemi-Rafsanjani's economic programs has detracted from his credibility and all his opponents are attacking him for it. The economic crisis in the country and the consequent, proliferating discontent of the people have motivated Hashemi-Rafsanjani's opponents to pile all kinds of blame on him and his cohorts. They wish to capitalize on this opportunity and once again they can take power with the help of another agent or pawn.

Thus exists the main objective of the RESALAT faction and all other opponents of Hashemi-Rafsanjani in the Majles and around Khamene'i. Despite the fact that Hashemi-Rafsanjani does not have a strong position, whether he will permit himself to be sacrificed in this manner requires greater attention and deliberation. That which is important is Hashemi-Rafsanjani's position in the future—with or without a change in the Constitution—and its significant impact on the situation in the Islamic Republic.

RESALAT Criticizes HAMSHAHRI Editor

NC2312162194 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 15 Dec 94 p 2

[Commentary by 'Alireza Shemirani: "Does the Tehran Mayor Abide By the Law?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A law prohibiting all kinds of unnecessary publications was approved on 17 September 1986 by the Islamic Majles, endorsed by the Guardians' Council on 4 November 1986, and conveyed to the cabinet by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani on 10 November for implementation. It is stipulated in the only clause of this law that "the allocation of funds from current credits and development allocations approved in the country's annual budget and of public funds and assets by ministries, institutions, etc., and the use of government resources and employees for collecting materials for publication as well as the writing, organizing, and printing of all kinds of books, newspapers, magazines, and similar publications etc., are banned. This ban includes all the funds of the above departments, even those that are exempt from the law of public accounts and all other government regulations in general."

According to this law nine ministries or institutions are exclusively exempt—with certain specifications and conditions—from the publication of periodicals, namely, the Islamic Guidance Ministry, the Islamic Propagation Organization, the Culture and Higher Education Ministry, the planning and research division of the Ministry of Education and Training, the War and Warfront Propaganda Department, the Martyrs' Foundation, and the in-house bulletins of ministries and the Information Ministry.

Note No. 4 of the Islamic Guidance Ministry, which is in charge of the correct implementation of this law, states:

"Note No. 4: The Islamic Guidance Ministry is obliged to maintain complete supervision over the performance of the abovementioned ministries, organizations, and institutions. In the event of observing any violations, the said violators are to be handed over to the relevant judicial authorities for prosecution and..." [ellipsis as published].

What is even more important is proviso No. 5 of this law which has been elaborated upon thus:

"All kinds of expenses in violation of this law will be considered unauthorized utilization of government funds."

The law, which is clearly stated, especially regarding the ban on the publication of newspapers etc., by government apparati is irrefutable, and it is obvious that the issuance of the license for the publication of HAMSHAHRI and later on the AFTAB-GARDAN [title of the children's supplement of the HAMSHAHRI newspaper] in the name of the Tehran Municipality and the use of municipal resources and budget can be considered a violation of the law. There are some who were wondering whether the law is applicable to the municipality as well. This doubt was clearly dispelled by the legal clarification approved by the Islamic Majles on 8 May 1994, which is as follows:

"In the single article of the law, the ban on publication and dissemination of unnecessary printed matter by ministries, government institutions, and companies approved on 21 October 1986 includes the country's municipality."

This law was endorsed by the Guardians' Council and by the Speaker of the Islamic Majles on 25 May this year and was then submitted to the president for ratification and subsequent implementation. It was then forwarded by the president to the Culture and Islamic Guidance Ministry on 27 May for implementation. Thus, as of that date, the publication of the HAMSHAHRI and AFTAB-GARDAN newspapers becomes a blatant violation of the law, and it is the duty of the Guidance Ministry to revoke the license of these two publications and to prosecute the violator under Note No. 4 of the law prohibiting publications, etc. He should also be handed over to the relevant judicial authorities for unauthorized use of government funds.

Do you think that the Tehran Municipality abides by the law?! The Tehran mayor has to choose between obedience to the law or insistence on the publication of HAMSHAHRI and AFTAB-GARDAN.

In addition to the fact that responsibility for implementing this law lies primarily with the Guidance Ministry, the latter should also clearly answer for what it has done regarding the correct implementation of the above law. There is no objection to the publication of any newspaper and periodical in the name of Karbaschi [Tehran mayor] without funds from and affiliation to the municipality. Since the license holder of HAMSHAHRI and AFTAB-GARDAN is the municipality, and these are being published and disseminated with the municipality's funds, their publication cannot continue merely by changing the form of the licenses.

Jannati Delivers Friday Prayer Sermon

LD2312140694 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0740 GMT 23 Dec 94 (tentative)

[First Friday prayers sermon by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, head of the Islamic Publicity Organization, in Tehran—live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Sermons during the past few weeks have been devoted to the issue of marja'iyat [source of emulation], and this was a suitable opportunity to provide explanations in that regard. This is perhaps my last discussion on this subject; however, if I deem it necessary I may devote another sermon to the issue.

You are more or less aware that one of the obligations of a shi'a—from the beginning when the imams took over the responsibility for Velayat [guardianship], and people were duty bound to obey them—was that if an imam passed away, the people should immediately go and find out who their next imam is.

Our traditions lay much stress on duty of Muslims, as one of the first things they should do following the demise of an imam, to find out who their next imam is. [passage omitted]

In the past it was rare for one person, one scholar, to be recognized as a single source of marja' for the whole shi'i [world]. That means that there should be no-one there who would emulate a different person if a single marja' was chosen. However, there were differences in discernment. One would say that this person was the most knowledgeable, another would prefer someone else; one would say this was wiser, another would say that was better. Sometimes there were a few scholars who were totally unrecognized to a group of people. That was because communication was not as fast as it is today. Usually there were different marja's.

I cannot remember a time when one could say clearly that such and such a mujtahid [source of religious authority] is the marja' for all shi'as. Of course there have been times when a particular marja' has enjoyed an absolute majority. This majority, however, was never achieved immediately after the demise of the previous marja'. When a marja' passed away, his emulators would go around asking this and than person, wondering who to emulate next. Sometimes they used to disperse, and each group of them would select one separate marja'. Sometimes, moreover, absolute majority used to materialize gradually. [passage omitted]

The situation in our time is similar to the past. It has not changed. People who used to emulate the late Grand Ayatollah Araki are now wondering what to do. Naturally they should ask the ulema and the experts who possess appropriate knowledge. However, when they do ask, they unfortunately do not hear one single answer. There are several reasons for this. Some individuals put one name forward, others select another name, while others go for a different person. There are also times when a group of individuals is put forward. For instance, three, five, or seven names are introduced and people are told to emulate all of them. Overall, then, there is no unanimous choice.

So what should one do under such circumstances? What should the emulators do? The issue is slightly complicated, but it would eventually resolve itself with the passage of time, just as in the past when problems used to arise after the demise of a particular marja'. The present situation will find stability in the near future. It is only now that this confusion exists.

In these circumstances, the people who seek to emulate someone should emulate a person they totally trust and in whose piety, knowledge, and understanding they have confidence. If they are unable to find such a person, and everybody says something different about who he should be, then the onus of selection is on the emulators themselves. In other words, the people who, upon hearing that one can emulate these four, five, six or however many scholars, have to make a choice for themselves.

Let me clarify this a bit. What do you do when faced with other issues? [passage omitted] In the same way that you save yourself from bewilderment and select a specialist to deal with your problems, you also have to find a specialist in religious and jurisprudence issues. So here, the choice belongs to the emulators.

And the criteria used by the emulators vary. What was true in the past is true today. Some people prefer a certain mujtahid. For example, a certain emulator may have a revolutionary spirit; he is young, he is a basiji, he cannot tolerate silence in the face of corruption and the enemy, he wants someone to step into the imam's [Khomeyni's] shoes. Since he has the choice, and since a particular person has not been introduced to him as a marja, he goes and chooses a marja with those qualities, with that spirit.

Or there may be an emulator who is not concerned with these games. He just wants someone to tell him about the duties involved in prayers, fasting, performing the haj; his transactions; the rules of marriage, divorce, inheritance; buying and selling. He wants to know the rules governing these. He does not have much to do with political issues, he has not got a revolutionary spirit, and in the past, during the life of his eminence the imam, he did not emulate his eminence the imam—or if he did, he was not involved that much; he only followed the rulings on prayers and transactions. Well, it is natural that a person with such a personality will go after a marja or mujtahid with the same spirit.

Sometimes, the situation is confined to the area in which you live. A mujtahid lives in a town in which most of the people know him, and they may have known him for a long time; on this basis, the choice would be made on a geographical basis. The people choose to emulate him because he lives in their area, in their town.

In any case, any group of people may choose to emulate someone and each group has its own criteria. And there is no other way. If the experts cannot agree on one person as a marja, this situation arises automatically and the choice belongs to the emulators.

But I want to point out something—I do not like this situation that much. This situation is natural; things have been like this before. But it seems to me—I have to say this quickly in passing—perhaps this situation should be reviewed in future. In other words, let the experts sit together and finally agree on one person to be marja so that these differences do not arise. These differences are not harmful in certain circumstances, but in other circumstances,they could be detrimental.

Let me give you an example. You know that in the past His Eminence Ayatollah Khu'i, may he be admitted to God's paradise, issued a fatwa saying that if the moon was sighted in any part of the world it would be the start of the new month here, even though no-one had seen the moon here. Well, this means that if the moon was sighted in Pakistan but not in Iran or Arab countries, he would say that those who had not seen the moon should take it that the new month had begun. Well, you saw that other marjas did not have the same fatwa and some difficulties arose. On the last day of Ramadan, some people started eating, drinking, and smoking in public; for others, the month had not ended and they were fasting. This caused some tension. This type of tension can arise in this situation. Now this is a simple example, but sometimes the situation can get complicated and major difficulties can arise. Fatwas can sometimes lead to quarrels.

In the past, when there was no Islamic rule, the choice of marja rested with the conscience of the people themselves. During Islamic rule, however, this does not seem to be suitable or beneficial. I said this so that the ulema, jurisprudents, and scholars should think about this situation a little. I believe that if we can find a solution that does not lead to such disunity, Islam would benefit.

The other point is that emulation is up to each person. You cannot force anyone to emulate this or that person. Emulation is free; anyone can decide and can do their duty. There is no compulsion involved.

This issue is very different from other political or nonpolitical issues. The things they are saying abroad—for instance, that there is a fight over marja'iyat—are due to ignorance of these affairs, of our situation. They are ignorant of the situation of Islamic countries, of Islamic issues, and especially of Iran. They do not know anything, even though they have so many spies and spy on Islamic countries posing as orientalists or researchers. They may collect some information, but at the same time they sometimes say things that are far from the truth. As I have said, this issue [marja'iyat] has existed before, it exists now, and will exist again in the future; there is no fight. Thus far, thanks be to God, our marja's have been so enlightened—enlightenment is a condition for marja'iyat—that they did not brag about being a marja'. They did not want to force anyone to emulate them.

Let me tell you something. One day—and I myself was present during this affair—someone came to see his eminence the imam, may he be admitted to God's paradise, and spoke lightly about one of the great marja's, saying: We wanted them to emulate you, but they have gone and started emulating someone else. Suddenly, the imam got angry and said: Do you think I want to collect emulators around myself? He reprimanded him and said: That person is one of Islam's great marja''s.

Such is the spirit of our marja'. Anyone who has not passed a course on modesty is not even suited to be a marja'.

Certain people may have acted quickly in inviting a certain person to become a marja'. But this cannot be called a power struggle over marja'iyat. Of course, you are aware of this, but let others pay attention and not spread these words among the people. [passage omitted]

Pakistan

Indian Official Declared Persona Non Grata

LD2512172894 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 1600 GMT 25 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has declared an official of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad as persona non grata. An announcement in Islamabad says this action regarding assistant visa attache (Dipat Thakur) has been taken for activities incompatible with his status as a member of the diplomatic mission. Pakistan has asked the Indian Government to recall him within 10 days. This message was conveyed to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad this evening.

Indian Consulate General in Karachi Ordered Closed

'Instigation of Terrorism' Cited

BK2612131994 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has asked India to close down its Consulate General in Karachi immediately. A foreign office spokesman, while briefing the newsmen in Islamabad today, said India has also been asked to withdraw the personnel at the Consulate General within the next 10 days.

The spokesman said the decision has been taken after obtaining clear and fresh evidence of India's involvement in planning, instigation, and execution of acts of terrorism and violence in Karachi. India has also been found involved in propagation of disaffection, disunity, and against territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. The spokesman said these activities constitute a clear violation of the international law.

The activities of RAW [India's Research and Analysis Wing] agents trained for the purpose of conducting terrorism and other anti-state activities were being coordinated from the office of the Consulate General of India. PTV Correspondent Azhar Masood says the spokesman cited different examples and released evidence to newsmen in support of Pakistan's decision. A number of arrests have also been made. Those apprehended having links with the consulate include a retired officer of the Ministry of Defense. In view of these activities, the spokesman said, Pakistan is left with no option but to exercise its right to demand the closure of the Indian Consulate General in Karachi.

Foreign Secretary Explains Closure

BK2612155894 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan has decided to close the Indian Consulate General in Karachi immediately and has asked India to withdraw its personnel within 10 days. The Indian high commissioner was summoned to the Foreign Office in Islamabad today to hear the decision.

Foreign Secretary Sheikh Najmuddin told reporters that Pakistan had to make this decision because of evidence regarding Indian involvement in planning, instigating, and carrying out terrorism and violence in Karachi. India is also involved in propagating unrest and spreading propaganda against Pakistan's unity, territorial integrity, and sovereignty. He said the Consulate General was found to be coordinating antistate activities in collaboration with RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] agents. The foreign secretary disclosed the names of many people who have been arrested for their involvement in subversive activities in coordination with RAW and with links to the Indian Consulate General. Some of the arrested terrorists have admitted that RAW agents have been involved in aggravating the situation in Karachi through terrorist acts. One terrorist, Ganu Mal, has admitted that he shot 15 people to death last year. Indian agents are involved in ferrying the terrorists to India by boat, training them, and bringing them back.

The foreign secretary reaffirmed Pakistan's desire for peaceful and normal relations with India on the basis of respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and noninterference in each other's affairs. He expressed the hope that the international community will take serious note that India is abetting terrorism with the aim of destabilizing, intimidating, and threatening Pakistan.

Answering a question, he said India should be declared a country sponsoring terrorism. He said Pakistan has already dismissed the Indian allegation that one of its officials in India is involved in espionage.

'Text' of Closure Amendment

BK2712094094 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 27 Dec 94 p 4

["Text" of amendment issued by the Foreign Secretary on 26 December]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ladies and gentlemen, a short while ago, I received the High Commissioner of India. I have conveyed to him the decision of the government of Pakistan to ask for the closure of the Indian Consulate General in Karachi immediately. We have requested the Indian government to withdraw the personnel of its Consulate General in Karachi within the next 10 days.

1. We have been constrained to take this decision because of clear and fresh evidence of India's involvement in the planning, instigation and execution of acts of terrorism and violence in Karachi and of the propagation of disaffection and propaganda against the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan. These activities are a violation of international law.

2. It may be recalled that India and Pakistan had decided in 1978 to reciprocally open their consulates at Bombay and Karachi. While the Indian consulate in Karachi was duly opened and has been functioning since 1979, we were denied the facilities required to operate our Consulate General in Bombay. The promise to handout Jihah House in Bombay was not fulfilled. Even after we opened our consulate in Bombay, with a skeleton staff, in August 1992 various hurdles were placed in the way of its normal operation. No landlord would rent premises for the consulate or for the residence of our Consul General. Those who were prepared do so were harassed by Indian agencies and fascist Hindu organisations. The staff of our Consulate General in Bombay was harassed constantly, preventing them from performing their normal duties. Matters came to such a pass that the Consulate General could not find a place to organise Pakistan's national day reception last year.

3. Under the circumstances, the government of Pakistan had decided to close down its Consulate General in Bombay on March 17, 1994.

4. In terms of the agreement on reciprocity concluded between Pakistan and India, Pakistan would have been well within its rights to close down the Indian consulate General in Karachi. We, however, exercised restraint. This was despite the fact that there was ample indications of the Indian Consulate General's activities which were inconsistent with its status and functions.

5. It may be recalled that the government of Pakistan has on numerous occasions drawn the attention of the Indian government to the undesirable and illegal activities of its Consulate General in Karachi. In December 1992, as means of curtailing these activities we asked the Indian government to reduce that the staff of the Consulate General from 84 to 20. Then again, in August 1993, we conveyed our serious concern over the illegal and impermissible activities of the Indian Consulate General.

6. Evidence which has come to light in recent days has established that, far from stopping its illegal activities, the Indian Consulate General in Karachi has been involved in fomenting disaffection. Its officials have repeatedly pressured visa seekers to engage in anti-Pakistan activities, it has played a significant role in RAW's [Research and Analysis Wing's] efforts to instigate the planning and execution of acts of terrorism and subversion in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan. Activities of networks of RAW agents trained for the purpose of conducting terrorism and other anti-state activity are being coordinated from this office as the following examples will show:

In September 1994, Pakistani agencies arrested a retired officer of the Ministry of Defence Syed Rahat Ali Khan. He was apprehended coming out surreptitiously from the Indian Consulate General with subversive literature, money and instructions from his RAW operators at the Indian Consulate General namely First Secretary A.K. Malik and J.J. Singh. Rahat Ali has admitted that he was recruited and operated by the RAW for the last several years.

In a raid conducted a few days ago, three members of a network of eight RAW-controlled terrorists operating in Karachi were apprehended. The names of the three who were apprehended are: 1) Dr. Maqbool Klmahk (2) Nathu Khan and (3) Ghanoo Mal alias Ghansham Das. The other five terrorists are still at large. Our security agencies are trying to apprehend them. Their names are: 1. Mr. Muhammad Usman alias Awan Khaskhell of Thatta, who is the leader of the network, 2. Yameen Mallah 3. Haji Raza Muhammad alias Haji Raza 4. Mohsin Shah 5. Asghar Fariq Muhammad Baluch.

The three arrested terrorists have revealed that RAW agents are heavily involved in aggravating the Karachi situation through acts of terrorism. One of them Ghanee Mol has confessed that he was responsible for the firing in Karachi last year in which 15 innocent people were killed. The three captured terrorists have confirmed that they are being directed for terrorist and sabotage activities by RAW operatives. This network of agents has also been taking and bringing back trained terrorists from India on boats. The captured terrorists informed that recently about 20 people were brought to Ibrahim Hyder Colony from India where one of the members of the network, Dr. Maqbool, provided them the necessary documents.

On the basis of information provided by the three arrested terrorist, a raid was conducted on 21 December 1991 in which 11 RAW-trained terrorists were apprehended and large quantity of arms and ammunition were recovered from their hideout in a flat located at Joher Square, Karachi (East) 12.

7. In view of the foregoing, the government of Pakistan has been left with no other option but to exercise the right to demand the closure of the Indian Consulate General in Karachi. Obviously, we cannot allow a centre for sabotage, subversion and terrorism to continue to operate within Pakistan. We expect that the Indian government will close-down the consulate forthwith and withdraw its personnel within the next 10 days.

8. I wish once again to underline Pakistan's desire for peaceful and normal relations with India on the basis of the mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs. The promotion of subversion and terrorism in Karachi, and other parts of Pakistan, by Indian agencies is completely contrary to the principles of the UN Charter and the norms of inter-state relations. We hope that the world community will take serious note of India's sponsorship of terrorism in Pakistan and adopt the necessary steps to prevent India from carrying out such blatant and criminal acts which are designed to destabilise and humiliate Pakistan.

Bhutto Calls Problems 'Terrorism,' Not Politics

BK2612122294 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 26 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, has said establishment of law and order in Karachi is the first priority of her government. Addressing a police durbar [gathering] in Karachi this morning, she said heavy responsibility lies on our police and she was confident that it will come up to the expectations of the nation. She said unfortunately terrorists have tried to create chaos through a planned conspiracy. She said it was not a political struggle, but was only terrorism and tyranny. No political worker can open fire on masjid [mosque]. The prime minister said politics and crimes are two separate things and we have to differentiate between them. She said Karachi is the heart of Pakistan and we will not allow anyone to play with the lives of the people.

The prime minister paid glowing tributes to police officers and jawans [policemen] for the courage and valor exhibited by them against dacoits [bandits] and terrorists and the determination with which they are protecting the life and property of the citizens. Ms. Benazir Bhutto said 2,500 million rupees package for Sindh police has been started to increase their resources. The prime minister also sympathized with the widows and orphans of martyred police personnel. She also distributed compensation checks and appointment letters among the widows and sons of martyred police personnel.

Editorial Welcomes Visit by U.S. Secretary of Defense

BK2412100194 Islamabad THE NATION in English 24 Dec 94 p 6

[Editorial: "Mr. Perry's Visit"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amir, Jamaat-i-Islami, Qazi Hussain Ahmad's announcement that he would organise a protest rally against the visit of US Defence Secretary to Pakistan, scheduled to begin on January 7, will come as a surprise to many. Qazi Sahib, explaining the reasons for the rally has said that the purpose of Perry's visit was to pressurise Pakistan to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT], regardless of whether India signed it or not. Even though Pakistan has repeatedly declared that it would not sign the Treaty unilaterally, Qazi Sahib's fear is that our Foreign Secretary would succumb to the pressure because, as he put it, "he was watching the interests of his foreign master." Actually, that very day our Foreign Office clarified Pakistan's position on both the NPT and Kashmir, which, it was reiterated, was the same as it has always been. There is a national consensus on both, and right from the Head of the State down to the ordinary citizen, there is no indication whatsoever, that a "sell out" is being considered about. Even for the sake of argument if it was so, no politician worth his salt can barter away such vital national interest and even conceive to remain in power. Yet if the purpose of the rally is to remove any doubts that may still be lingering in the minds of some American and Pakistani policy makers about Pakistan's resolve to remain steadfast to its declared policy on NPT, then there may be no harm in it. It may be superfluous exercise to undertake, but if it gives any satisfaction to Qazi Sahib to articulate our national policy, let him do so. Holding a rally is after all his democratic right. Qazi Sahib knows there is little difference of opinion in the country about the linkage of our nuclear capability with our vital security interests. This linkage has been explained and elucidated repeatedly. Every US Congressman knows it by now and, of course everyone in the US administration knows it. One indication of that may be that the offer of a US nuclear umbrella, which at one time used to be made to Pakistan in return for our unilateral acceptance of the NPT, is now being made to India. The US administration seems to have realised that the problem is not with Pakistan but with India, which has been trying to hide behind a mythical threat to its security from China. The US administration probably knows that while there is little chance of a war between China and India, the danger of a war between India and Pakistan is tangible. It is the Subcontinent, where India continues to harbour hegemonic dreams and not in the context of Asia as a whole that the nuclear issue has, therefore, to be addressed. That is why the UN General Assembly, despite Indian opposition, found no difficulty in passing a resolution for the denuclearisation of South Asia.

The NPT may or may not be on Mr Perry's agenda, but there are quite a few other defence related issues, including the long pending matter of the F-16s, that need to be sorted out between Pakistan and the US. We should welcome the visit of Mr Perry to discuss that and other matters and not adopt a stand offish posture just to show our annoyance with the US policies. We may not be happy with the US for its Pressler Amendment but that is not the be all and end all of our relations.

Sri Lanka

Government To Review VOA Relay Station Agreement

BK2412111794 Hong Kong AFP in English 0846 GMT 24 Dec 94

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Dec 24 (AFP)—Sri Lanka is to review an agreement it signed with the United States for a Voice of America (VOA) relay station, following protests backed by the Catholic church, officials said Saturday [December 24].

A cabinet sub-committee appointed by the People's Alliance government has decided that the VOA agreement should be "reviewed comprehensively" in the light of concerns expressed by religious and social groups, officials said.

Church leaders have backed the campaign opposing the relay station in the northwestern coastal village of Iranawila. Approval for the station was given by the former United National Party administration.

Those opposing the relay station want the agreement renegotiated. They contend the existing provisions would deprive fishermen of their livelihood and would damage local culture and the environment.

The area's predominantly Roman Catholic inhabitants have joined religious leaders and social organisations in protests against the pact. At least one civilian died when police fired on anti-VOA demonstrators.

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